

From Baader to Prada

The Representation of Urban Terrorism in German-Language Film

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Abstract

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From Baader to Prada:

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This study analyses the response of filmmakers to the left-wing terrorism of the Red Army Faction (RAF) experienced by West Germany in the 1970s, and its legacy. At the height of its activity, the RAF violently shook the foundations of postwar German democracy with a string of politically motivated attacks against the Federal Republic which brought the state's democratic credentials into question. The first part of this thesis considers the intervention of the New German Cinema on the underlying political crisis that the RAF unleashed, examining the filmmakers' attempt to catalyze a labour of mourning which connected contemporary left-wing terror to the unresolved legacies of the Nazi past, but which the state had tried to close down. Ultimately, however, the filmmakers were unable to contest a wave of contemporary repression which threatened to engulf the memory of the RAF, and so by the mid-1980s, when not altogether forgotten, a dominant consensual understanding of the immediate past which spoke from the perspective of the state had been set. However, in recent years there has been a renewed explosion of interest in this brief yet turbulent period in history, at the vanguard of which has stood the nation's filmmakers. The second part of this examines how post-unification filmmakers have responded to this ostensibly dead socio-political and, for artists, aesthetic phenomenon. I examine how new films have engaged recent cultural implications and manifestations (such as the 'Prada-Meinhof' clothing phenomenon) of the terrorist legacy and seek to innovate the ideologically entrenched cultural terms of remembrance which had settled around the group in order to offer a more nuanced, complex reading of the past.

Preface

At the time of writing, Germany has recently marked the thirtieth anniversary of the so-called ‘Deutscher Herbst’ or ‘German Autumn’ of 1977, a brief yet pivotal episode in the history of the ‘old’ Federal Republic which has since come to stand as the most potent symbol of the terrorism of the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (*Red Army Faction*), and the perceived crisis of democracy that it provoked.¹ Following the group’s rash inception in 1970, the RAF emerged as an aberrant and ill-fated extension of the fading ‘68er’ generational revolt which had seen the postwar children attack the parent generation’s silence over the Nazi past, as well as the perceived repetition of that past’s socio-economic and political structures in their present-day society. But while the 68er-movement’s rebellion had remained predominantly peaceful, the RAF’s extreme use of violence to challenge what it viewed as the ‘imperialist’ and ‘fascist’ state would violently shake the foundations of the young postwar German democracy, triggering a social climate of fear, paranoia and distrust, and plunging the country into almost a decade of political repression. For many commentators, both at home and abroad, the state response to the terrorist threat exposed a prevailing authoritarian character that had informed the Federal Republic’s fascist pre-history, thus calling in to question the government’s ability to maintain the very civil liberties that were otherwise extolled by its *Grundgesetz*. The ‘German Autumn’ of ’77 marked the zenith of the first and defining era of the RAF’s history, and its conflict with the state. As Stefan Aust maintains in his

¹ Hereafter RAF.

seminal characterization of the period, ‘es waren sieben Jahre, die die Republik veränderten.’²

Considering the seismic implications of the RAF’s campaign of urban terrorism during the 1970s, the expediency and effectiveness with which the immediate memory of the group was contained and subsequently regulated is perhaps surprising. Despite criticism of the federal government’s turn to an increasingly militant form of democracy in a bid to quell the challenge to its political legitimacy, the state undoubtedly emerged as the ultimate victor in the conflict with the RAF. As Friedrich Christian Delius has commented, ‘der Einfluß des Terrorismus auf die Gesellschaft war enorm, jedoch anders als geplant’: rather than being ‘systemsprengend’ the RAF’s terrorism can be read as having unwittingly served the inverse of its intended ‘revolutionary’ function, emerging instead as ‘systemerhaltend’.³ The demonisation of Andreas Baader and his comrades by the state formed the basis for an official historiography of national unity against the terrorist threat which in fact smoothed over, rather than contest, the ruptures in West Germany’s collective identity. When not completely forgotten, by the mid-1980s West German society had put the topic ‘RAF’ firmly behind it, and while the RAF did not formally serve itself up for historicisation until it announced its disbandment in 1998, the terms of its official remembrance had long since been set. But that is not to say that such terms went unchallenged.

The central aim of this thesis is to consider the specific contributions which filmic texts can make to the debate on the legacy of left-wing urban terrorism in a specifically German context. In the wake of the ‘German Autumn’ it was the filmmakers of the New

² Stefan AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex* (München: Wilhelm Goldman Verlag, 1998), p. 659.

³ See Friedrich Christian DELIUS, *Warum Ich schon immer Recht hatte – und andere Irrtümer: Ein Leitfaden für deutsches Denken* (Rohwolt: Berlin, 2003), p. 119.

German Cinema who were roused into action by precisely the rate at which the immediate memory of the RAF appeared to have been contained, even forgotten. Valorised by Eric Rentschler for its 'oppositional energies and critical voices', the New German Cinema became a crucial site for the articulation of a critical alternative discourse which sought to challenge the official memory of the 'German Autumn' in addition to militating against collective amnesia. Furthermore, Films such as *Deutschland im Herbst* (Alexander Kluge et al, 1978), *Die dritte Generation* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1979) and *Die bleierne Zeit* (Margarethe von Trotta, 1981) stressed the need for oppositional voices, constructing not only counter memories surrounding the terrorists themselves, but also counter histories which emphasised, rather than play down, the role of the Nazi past in contextualizing the urban terrorism of the seventies. Less concerned with the oftentimes hazy, stated ideological objectives of the RAF than the psychological causes of terrorism and its socio-political consequences, such filmmakers intervened in the discursive struggle surrounding the RAF, suggesting that there was more to said on a debate which, in their eyes, had been prematurely closed.

Terrorism had been in the New German Cinema's sights as early as 1975 when Volker Schlöndorff and von Trotta released a filmic adaptation of Heinrich Böll's novella, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*. Less concerned with terrorism per se than a scathing indictment of police practices and the manipulation of public opinion by the mass media, the film acts as a prologue to post-'77 interventions on the topic, having been made at a time when a more nuanced public debate was still possible. However, as we shall see in the course of this study, the success of the New German Cinema's contestation of the official voices surrounding the terrorism of the RAF, as well as its

attempt to counter contemporary repression is debatable, arguably only occupying a marginal voice.

The period beginning in the 1990s arguably dealt the identity of the RAF a final and irrevocable blow, thus paving the road to its demise in 1998. The political changes and upheavals of unification overshadowed any lingering memory of the terrorist past and by the mid-90s the RAF appeared to have been signed off on as a dead socio-political phenomenon, even if, as the filmmakers of the New German Cinema had suggested, this was premature. Nonetheless, the commemorative impulse was hard to resist and so a media offensive accompanied the twentieth anniversary of the 'German Autumn' in 1997. But rather than reopen a dialogue with the terrorist past that might have formulated questions, the event strengthened the dominant *modus operandi* of cultural remembrance in which the negative construction of the terrorists had been used to suggest a positive view of the former West German state. In doing so, the commemorative year consolidated the ideological schism of '77, namely a *Täter/Opfer*, or, 'them and us' binary.

However, in a striking development, Germany has witnessed an unprecedented RAF-revival in the first decade of the new millennium. Since 1997 there has been a surge in intellectual assessments of the RAF both by English and German speaking scholars alike, and an increasing number of former RAF members have begun to break their silence over their militant past. Aspects of the memory of the RAF have been recalled, or, more aptly, recycled by 89er pop culture. Since its genesis around 1999, the 'Prada-Meinhof' clothing phenomenon, which ranges from slogan t-shirts with images of Baader, Ensslin and Meinhof on the chest to vintage lines which ape the '70s styles worn

by the group's leading cadre, has seen the RAF repackaged in terms of its aesthetic potential, more often than not drawing on the myth of terrorist glamour or 'RAF-chic' that has surrounded the group since the contested deaths at Stammheim. The popular hip hop artist Jan Delay draws on such a development in his 2001 song *Die Söhne Stammheim* which exemplifies the RAF's status as icons of pop – in his lyrics Baader und Ensslin sit alongside Jürgen and Zlatko, the best-known contestants from Germany's first series of the *Big Brother* reality-television show in 2000. From clothing to music and novels from pop's literary canon such as Leander Scholz's *Rosenfest* (2001), which Stefan Reinecke described as '[der] Roman zum Prada-Meinhof-Shirt',⁴ the RAF has seemingly become the brand of choice for the pop-driven '89ers of the Berlin Republic, the name increasingly applied to post-unification Germany.

The ostensible pop-appropriation of left-wing terrorism as pure entertainment was followed by cultural attempts to reengage the RAF from a critical contemporary perspective. In January 2005 the disputed show 'Zur Vorstellung des Terrors: Die RAF-Ausstellung' opened its doors to the public in Berlin. Intended to counteract the mythologizing impulse that surrounded the RAF, the controversy that the *Berliner Kunstwerke* exhibition generated – to be discussed in Chapter 4 – suggested that the wounds of the terrorist legacy had by no means been healed. A less salubrious signifier of the current popularity of the group, the RAF has even been seized upon by the pornography industry. In 2004 the self-styled 'reluctant pornographer'⁵ Bruce LaBruce released his so-called 'agit-porn movie' *The Raspberry Reich*,⁶ in which the terrorist

⁴ Stefan REINECKE, 'Das RAF-Gespenst', *taz*, 5 September 2002.

⁵ This citation is taken from the director's collection of memoirs of the same name. See Bruce LABRUCE, *The Reluctant Pornographer* (Gutter Press, 1997).

⁶ See *BruceDelBruce.com* <www.brucelabruce.com/movies.html> [accessed on 16 July 2007]

leader Gudrun, convinced that heterosexuality is an oppressive bourgeois construct, indoctrinates her male followers into her bisexual cadre in order to release their revolutionary potential. The film – which has even spawned its own range of t-shirts carrying the RAF emblem and slogans such as ‘heterosexuality is the opiate of the masses’ and ‘put your marxism where your mouth is’ – was described by the film critic Georg Seeßlen as ‘eine RAF-Porno-Laienspiel-Satire’ in which ‘der deutsche Terrorismus in einer Art von Underground-Pulp-Fiction als feuchter Traum erscheint.’⁷ Clearly, the RAF is undoubtedly back in vogue, having become a cultural cliché in a way that few would have expected even ten years ago.

LaBruce’s dubious claims to artistic legitimacy notwithstanding, the centrality of mainstream film to the recent RAF revival is indisputable. Indeed, it is post-unification German filmmakers who have been at the vanguard of the renewed explosion of interest in this brief yet turbulent period in the pre-history of the Berlin Republic. Amidst the appropriating, ostensibly apolitical parodies of contemporary pop culture, film has once again emerged as a crucial cultural site for engaging the RAF, this time in terms of a critical re-examination of the terrorist legacy in relation to the present. However, now filmmakers are not only responding to national history, but to film history also: the way in which recent filmmakers have responded to the terrorist past might also expose a dialogue with the cinematic heritage of the celebrated New German Cinema, which casts a monolithic shadow over subsequent generations of German-language filmmakers.

Post-unification filmmakers have returned to the topic of the RAF with a vengeance, but in light of a shifting social context of nearly twenty five years. Leading

⁷ Georg SEBLEN. ‘*The Raspberry Reich*. Die RAF als Underground-Pulp-Fiction in einem Film von Bruce LaBruce’, *epd Film*, Nr. 4, 2 April 2004.

the charge was, perhaps appropriately, a veteran of the New German Cinema, Volker Schlöndorff, who returned to the topic with his feature film *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* in 2000. He was followed by new and emerging filmmakers not so closely connected to the 68er revolt; in 2001 Christian Petzold released his feature film *Die innere Sicherheit* closely followed by Andres Veiel's documentary feature *Black Box BRD* and Gregor Schnitzler's comedy *Was tun, wenn's brennt?.* 2002 saw the release of Christopher Roth's heavily fictionalized biopic *Baader* and Gerd Conradt's documentary feature *Starbuck – Holger Meins* (2002). In 2004 the Austrian-born director Hans Weingartner released *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, which is undoubtedly the most well-known of this latest cluster of films outside of Germany, and, in the same year, Marcus Mittermeier's *Mux Mäuschen still* also adopted the optic of comedy to approach the terrorist past.

Rachel Palfreyman is not alone in registering the unanticipated nature of this revival, describing the return to the topic among current filmmakers as 'a striking and audacious turn.'⁸ Such a view is understandable, given the sense of finality ascribed to this aspect of West German history as early as the immediate aftermath of the 'German Autumn': beyond the widely accepted discursive consensus on the RAF, expressed through the binary *Täter/Opfer* dichotomy, few new questions were being asked. The terrorist past was ostensibly done and dealt with despite the previous efforts of the filmmakers of the New German Cinema to problematise the state perspective on the RAF and promote the need to come to terms with its terrorism in a more nuanced fashion. Although, as noted above, the commemorative resonance of autumn 1997 provoked a flurry of media interest there seemed to be little room for analysis in favour of

⁸ Rachel PALFREYMAN, 'The Fourth Generation: Legacies of Violence as Quest for Identity in Post-Unification Terrorism Films', in David CLARKE (ed.), *German Cinema since Unification* (London & New York: Continuum, 2006), pp. 11-42 (12).

consolidating official memory. The entrenched battle lines of the 70s which had denied any analytical scope or questions beyond the accepted state perception of the terrorists as monstrous murderers who threatened democracy might have cooled, but they had not been overcome; the dominant, one-dimensional 'Negativaura' surrounding the RAF was ever present, but simply redeployed in the interest of selling newspapers rather than protecting the hegemony of the state.⁹

With no loss of irony, it was in fact film which also led this charge. Heinrich Breloer's made-for-television, two-part docudrama *Todesspiel* was the must-see television event of the year in 1997 which offered a 'so war es wirklich' claim to authenticity, as Walter Uka suggests.¹⁰ But rather than offer any new perspectives it merely went over old ground, deriving a thriller potential from the Schleyer kidnapping and consolidating the state perspective. As Ute Scheub commented, many viewers, particularly the younger ones, 'geißelten den Film als Thrillerschnulze, die sich die Sicht des Hardliners Helmut Schmidt zu eigen machte.'¹¹ Breloer's film did little to pose new questions or counteract the mythologizing impulse surrounding the terrorists, either in terms of a state-sanctioned master narrative or the glamourising parables of pop, serving instead to underline the finality of this past.

Considering the apparent lack of interest in the topic throughout the 90s, outside of Germany one could be forgiven for assuming that the resurgence of interest in the RAF among the nation's cultural commentators is a knock-on effect of the wider

⁹ See Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000), p. 163.

¹⁰ Walter UKA, 'Terrorismus im Film der 70er Jahre: Über die Schwierigkeiten deutscher Filmemacher beim Umgang mit der realen Gegenwart', in K. WEINHAUER, J. REQUATE & H.-G. HAUPT (eds.), *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren* (Frankfurt & New York: Campus Verlag, 2007), pp. 382-398 (395).

¹¹ Ute SCHEUB, 'Der Schraubstock', *die tageszeitung*, 30 June 1997.

obsession with global terror. Since the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001, the western world has been caught in the grip of an oftentimes hysterical fear of global terror offensives which is becoming a defining, almost suffocating, feature of a growing post-millennial uncertainty over the future. However, although the terrorized global psyche might, in part, account for the longevity of the recent RAF revival in Germany, the resurgence of interest in the left-wing urban terrorism that dominated the 'old' Federal Republic in fact predates '9/11'. The so-called 'RAF-chic' found its voice at the close of the last decade and the vast majority of the latest cluster of films to deal with the RAF had either been released prior to the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre or were already in production. How, then, does one account for this return of this ostensibly obsolete phenomenon in Germany's cultural output, from film to the manufacture of 'Prada-Meinhof' slogan t-shirts?

It might simply be a side-effect of the group's historicisation; although the example of the disputed 'RAF-Ausstellung' demonstrates that the RAF still has the power to provoke, it no longer resonates with the same degree of intensity within the collective consciousness as it once did. It might also be an expression of an ardent nostalgia prompted by the close of the century. The sense of caesura which surrounded the impending millennial shift prompted waves of retrospectives and 'retro' shows which took a nostalgic look back at decades past. In Germany this was nothing new. The social upheavals brought about by unification prompted a wave of nostalgia for the former GDR in the form of *Ostalgie* after the promises of German/German reintegration failed to live up to expectations. Less discussed, however, was the growing wave of *Westalgie* which saw cultural commentators exhibit nostalgia for aspects of the West German society of

the 1970s and 1980s, and which will be discussed in Chapter 4. As well as the invocation of the signs and insignias of the RAF in the pop culture of the Berlin Republic's 89ers, this trend of looking back to and reassessing the past, combined with the sense that the discussion of the RAF had never in fact been satisfactorily completed, might account for the slew of films to deal with this problematic past, standing as they did at the cusp of the wider trend of reassessing the legacy of '68 – of which the terrorism of the RAF is a part – in light of subsequent generations. This is itself no doubt attributable, at least in part, to the 68ers ascendancy to the seat of power in 1998. The formation of the Red-Green coalition fronted by Gerhard Schröder and Joschka Fischer, who as well as many of their ministers have roots in the radical politics of the 1960s and 1970s, was met with sceptical caution: Ingo Cornils remarks 'that whilst for the first time historians attempted to argue that 1968 had indeed become history [...] this government, according to some observers, at least, threatened to put the utopian dream back on the agenda.'¹²

Indeed, more so than the emergence of global terror it was the echo of Germany's own terrorist past in 2001 which might be read as having sustained the renewed interest in the topic of the RAF. In this year the success of the 68ers 'long march' was temporarily frustrated by revelations about the serving Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's street-fighting past as a militant 'Sponti' in Frankfurt. Utilized by his opponents as a tactic to discredit the popular Foreign Minister, the short-lived controversy reignited the uncomfortable connection between the 68er-movement and the trail of violence that the blind spot in its history, terrorist violence, had left in its wake. The legitimacy of violence as a means of protest was once again a question for debate, a discussion which

¹² Ingo CORNILS, 'Successful Failure? The Impact of the German Student Movement on the Federal republic of Germany', in Stuart TABERNER and Frank FINLAY (eds.), *Recasting German Identity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002) pp. 105-122 (105).

coincided near simultaneously with the release of Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* and Veiel's *Black Box BRD*. Reassessing the 68er past in particular became a preoccupation of not just subsequent generations but of 68ers themselves as the positive legacy of their impact, in particular that of the student movement, came under increasing attack. Schlöndorff's return to his generation's past in *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* was widely criticised as presenting a rose-tinted revision of his generation that supported the glamourising, mythologizing impulse surrounding the RAF and might in fact preclude 'honest' appraisals of the period. Our later discussion of Schlöndorff's filmic text will, however, demonstrate that it attempts to locate aspects of that past which might serve as an antidote to the ideologically stunted appraisals of that past in contemporary youth culture, rather than stand in support of it.

Certainly, although this latest cluster of films deals with the terrorism of the 1970s, it also uses the RAF as an optic through which present-day issues might be read. Indeed, as geographical and ideological boundaries have been redrawn over twenty years of a shifting social context, so too must discursive boundaries be reassessed. With the unification of Germany and the collapse of Communism in the early-1990s the identity of the RAF was dealt a decisive blow, heralding, as it did, the erosion of ideological enemies and allies alike. Furthermore, through the process of what has been termed 'normalisation', the 'new' Federal Republic has arguably entered a phase in which it is more at ease with regard to the legacy of the Nazi past, which had previously fuelled the generational rift that found its expression in both the student movement and the terrorism of the RAF, with new issues such as immigration and the rich/poor divide now dominating Germany's socio-political terrain. It is against this shifting social context that

the RAF is reassessed, both on its own terms as a legacy about which there is more to be said and also as an optic through which contemporary German society can be analyzed.

Furthermore, the return to urban terrorism in this cluster of films might be seen as a defining moment in the development of the post-Wall German cinema. Whereas, after the demise of the New German Cinema, the German film industry of the 1990s was famously described by Eric Rentschler as a largely apolitical ‘cinema of consensus’ which lacked ‘oppositional energies and critical voices’, the critical reengagement with the RAF at the turn of the millennium stands as the advance guard of a wider return to cinematic treatments of uniquely German historical and political concerns.¹³ Just as the treatment of the RAF within the New German Cinema marked a sustained turn to history and uniquely German issues amongst its filmmakers, the rediscovery of this topic by recent filmmakers prefaced films such as *Good Bye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003), *Der Untergang* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004), *Sophie Scholl - Die letzten Tage* (Marc Rothemund, 2005) and, most recently, the Oscar winning *Das Leben der Anderen* (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2006), thus leading to speculation that the German cinema might again occupy the critical and internationally revered position of the New German Cinema.

Considering the interest surrounding the RAF and the return to prominence of the German film industry it is surprising that little scholarly interest has been devoted to this latest cycle of films to engage with domestic terrorism in Germany. Aside from chapters in collected editions by Klaus Kreimeier and Rachel Palfreyman, little has been

¹³ See Eric RENTSCHLER, ‘From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus’, in Mette HJORT and Scott MACENZIE (eds.) *Cinema and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2000). pp. 260-77 (263).

written on the subject.¹⁴ Most recently the film historian Thomas Elsaesser has published *Terror und Trauma: zur Gewalt des Vergangenen in der BRD*, but aside from Heinrich Breloer's *Todesspiel* (1997) he does not offer an assessment of the post-millennial films. Given his reputation as a stalwart of the New German Cinema, it is perhaps predictable that Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* has garnered the most, when still limited, critical attention. Furthermore, there has yet to be a book-length study to examine this body of films dealing with the RAF, either those from the New German Cinema or post-unification filmmakers, or indeed both. This study covers a substantial period from the height of the New German Cinema to the present day. Although the primary focus of this study is on the most recent films to have dealt with the RAF it will also consider two key texts which exemplify the New German Cinema's stance, as a point of contextualization and departure for our discussion of the later films.

This study is divided into two parts, both of which begin with a contextual framework which will inform my subsequent readings of the films. To better understand the RAF it is necessary to engage, albeit briefly, with the ideas and events which gave rise to '1968' (Chapter 1), and the impact of the 'generation of '68' on the Berlin Republic (Chapter 4). This will also aid our readings of *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* and *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*; while the majority of the films in this study deal almost exclusively with the RAF, both Schlöndorff and Weingartner are concerned not just with the aberrant singularity of the terrorism of the RAF but with the wider historical legacy of the 68ers. Chapter 1 will discuss the most important details of the German Student

¹⁴ See Klaus KREIMEIER, 'Die RAF und der deutsche Film', in Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR (ed.), *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus*, Bnd. 2 (Hamburger Edition: Hamburg, 2006), pp. 1155-1170 and PALFREYMAN, 'The Fourth Generation: Legacies of Violence as Quest for Identity in Post-Unification Terrorism Films'.

Movement before moving on to an outline of the first and defining era of the RAF between 1970 and 1977, and to which the filmmakers of the New German Cinema responded. The limited size of this project does not allow room for a detailed consideration of all of the terrorism films that emerged during the course of the 1970s and 80s. For this reason Chapters 2 and 3 focus on two of the most crucial filmic texts of the New German Cinema to engage the terrorism of the RAF, namely the collaborative film *Deutschland im Herbst* and von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit*.¹⁵ Organised as they are around issues of memory and repression, these two key films have been chosen due to their focus on 'opening' up the debate on terrorism, the immediate memory of which the filmmakers felt had been prematurely consigned to historical amnesia following the bloodshed of the 'German Autumn.' Furthermore, *Deutschland im Herbst* holds a representative significance; this collective film brings many of the pivotal voices of the New German Cinema (such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, Edgar Reitz and Volker Schlöndorff) together in one space. Our discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 will establish a further point of reference for the consideration of both historical and film historical continuities and discontinuities in the post-unification terrorism films discussed in part II.

Chapter 2 then, reassesses *Deutschland im Herbst*, a film symptomatic of the New German Cinema's wider preoccupation with the legacy of Germany's National Socialist past. *Deutschland im Herbst* serves several functions. On the one hand the film explores the perceived nexus of continuities between the fascism of the Federal Republic's

¹⁵ Other films to have emerged during the 1970s and 80s such as Schlöndorff's *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*, Fassbinder's *Die dritte Generation* and Reinhard Hauff's *Stammheim* (1986) will be discussed in brief during the course of the thesis, particularly in relation to the post-unification terrorism films.

prehistory and its alleged prevalence in West Germany society of the 1970s. The film also offers an alternative perspective to the representation of the terrorism of the RAF in the mass-media, and so is engaged in the construction of counter memories which privilege the 'dissenting' voices that the state sought to lock out of public discourse during the 'German Autumn'.

Chapter 3 reconsiders Margarethe von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit* which takes the nexus of historical continuities proposed by *Deutschland im Herbst* and makes the link explicit. Von Trotta constructs the terrorism of the RAF in terms of the return of the repressed, that is as a direct consequence of the alleged failure of the war generation to deal with the atrocities committed under National Socialism in the name of Germany. Von Trotta's film also picks up on a thread introduced at the very end of *Deutschland im Herbst* which posits the child as the source of utopian hope for subsequent generations. In von Trotta's film she similarly imbues the child (in this case Jan, the son of a terrorist mother, Marianne) with the utopian potential to break the cycle of violence which began with the war.

The second half of this study moves on to consider the representation of urban terrorism in four post-unification films; Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit*, Veiel's *Black Box BRD*, Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* and Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*. The second part of the thesis begins by establishing a contextual model exploring the trajectory of both the RAF and its memory in German society, and the German cinema post-unification, further elucidating some of the key developments which have seen the RAF rise from the ashes of its own disbandment into a bulwark of German pop culture.

Chapter 5 considers Christian Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* which, I suggest, can be read as a pseudo-sequel to von Trotta's film, posing, as it does, the question of what has happened to the utopian potential of the child established in *Die bleierne Zeit*? The male Jan is replaced by the female Jeanne who was born to militant parents in the terrorist underground. The film is preoccupied with the implications of the legacy of the RAF for subsequent generations. The film would also seem to nod consciously to von Trotta's aesthetic strategy as well as adding its own twist with a visual coda which reflects the notion of the RAF 'haunting' subsequent generations.

Chapter 6 focuses on Andres Veiel's documentary feature *Black Box BRD*. Aside from the obvious points of generic commonality between *Black Box BRD* and *Deutschland im Herbst*, Veiel's film marks a departure from the strategies of the filmmakers of the New German Cinema. With some 25 years distance from the immediacy of the 'German Autumn' Veiel is concerned less with creating counter memories, as was the case for this previous generation of filmmakers, than seeking to balance out competing memories. Attempting to escape the ideological battle lines of the seventies, Veiel's film argues that it is time to break the polarised *Täter/Opfer* binary which has followed the RAF from its inception to the present day.

Chapter 7 considers Schlöndorff's return to the topic of urban terrorism twenty-five years after the release of *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*. With more than two decades of hindsight Schlöndorff's return to the topic of urban terror is a more direct engagement with the legacy of the RAF. *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* follows Rita, an idealistic would-be revolutionary whose slide into violence sees her flee the Federal Republic for the German Democratic Republic, and the vain hope of a new life free of

violence. Cynically viewed by its critics as, at best, an apology for the terrorism of his generation and, at worst, an attempt to garner favour with the latest youth generation by glamourising terrorism, the film does in fact problematise the terrorist past. Schlöndorff, troubled by the post-ideological imperatives of the very consumer market he is accused of appealing to, attempts to relocate the wider utopian dimension of his politically motivated generation which the director suggests was perverted by the call to arms, but which he feels is sorely missing in contemporary German society.

Chapter 8 considers the most recent and internationally best known film to deal with the terrorist legacy, Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*. As much a reckoning with the wider 68er-movement as the terrorism of the RAF, Weingartner looks to the 68er past in an attempt to motivate the unfocused members of his own generation, whose lack of political engagement Schlöndorff laments. For Weingartner, '68' posits a potential example of how to find a useable form of protest when it has seemingly all been said and done, and failed. In a cultural climate in which the RAF as well as icons of revolutionary participation such as Che Guevara have been coopted by capitalism's powers of commodification, Weingartner's protagonists find themselves asking what is (L)eft?

Clearly, all of the films in this study are engaged in the act of remembering the urban terrorism that dominated West Germany in the 1970s, from the interventions of the New German Cinema on the disputed memory of the 'German Autumn' to the post-unification reassessments of this period. As such, memory discourse can provide a useful methodology for our subsequent investigations. In particular, in the course of Chapter 1, I draw on Jan and Assmann's theory of communicative and cultural memory as a

conceptual optic through which the trajectory of the memory of the RAF might be profitably read. Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory will be further nuanced through recourse to the thoughts of Aleida Assmann and Marianne Hirsch also.

Part I

Terrorism and the New German Cinema

Chapter 1

The 68ers, the Red Army Faction and the New German Cinema

On May 14, 1970 the state prisoner Andreas Baader, aided by Gudrun Ensslin and Ulrike Meinhof, sprang out of the window of the Institute for Social Studies, Berlin and into the illegality of the nascent terrorist underground in West Berlin. The liberation of Baader would become the first action by, and thus marked the inception of, the Red Army Faction, better known to contemporary witnesses as the Baader-Meinhof Gang/Group. Baader had been serving the remainder of a sentence for his part in the fire-bombing of two Frankfurt department stores with Ensslin in 1968 which had been carried out, the defendant's lawyer Horst Mahler argued at the trial, as a protest against America's 'war of oppression' in Vietnam and West German society's support of the conflict, which was deemed an abhorrent act of hypocrisy considering Germany's recent past. As Stefan Aust notes, for the defendants this act of arson in protest against a war being fought thousands of miles away was 'eine Rebellion gegen eine Generation, die in der NS-Zeit millionfache Verbrechen geduldet und sich dadurch mitschuldig gemacht hatte.'¹

Baader and Ensslin's 'charge of fascism' (*Faschismusvorwurf*), if not quite the means of protesting against it, had become increasingly commonplace during the 1960s among the members of the immediate postwar generation. Later designated the 'generation of '68', and for reasons we shall presently discuss, this cohort castigated its parents for their varying degrees of complicity in the crimes of the Nazi past. Furthermore, the 68ers attacked what they viewed as the persistence of this past on the present, challenging the perceived authoritarian, even fascist, tendencies of those in

¹ AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 76.

power which, in their view, flourished under the conditions of advanced capitalism and its stranglehold over individual autonomy. The Vietnam Campaign was a synergistic rallying point for protest movements the world over, but in West Germany it prompted an added resonance; how could the hegemonic parent culture, which after the sting of Nazism claimed it did not want any more wars, support the American involvement in Vietnam? Although the wave of protest experienced by the Federal Republic in the 1960s was by no means limited to the country's youth, it found its most sustained expression in the German student movement which has since become synonymous with the wider 68er-movement, or revolt.

One of the less salubrious but more complicated facets of the impact of the 68er legacy is the proximity of the student movement to the violence of the RAF. This uncomfortable association had been subdued by the, albeit uneasy, consensual interpretation of this past as a 'successful failure'. However, the dispute on the extent of such a connection has become increasingly heated in recent years. Most recently, and following in the wake of revelations in 2001 over the former Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's militant past, the historian Wolfgang Kraushaar stood at the epicenter of a dispute that erupted again in 2005 due to remarks he made in the small volume *Rudi Dutschke Andreas Baader und die RAF*, and to which we shall return in Chapter 4.²

Certainly, an early 'blueprint' for Baader and Ensslin's embryonic act of terror in Frankfurt was derived from the periphery of the student movement, namely the 'political clowns' of the progressive *Kommune I* whose imaginative happenings had seen them charged by the *Sozialistischer deutscher Studentenbund* (SDS) with bringing the

² See Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, Karin WIELAND and Jan REEMSTMA, *Rudi Dutschke Andreas Baader und die RAF* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005).

movement into disrepute. In 1967 the commune, inspired by recent events in Belgium, distributed sardonic leaflets which concluded with the polemic 'burn. ware-house, burn', a slight mistranslation of the German word for department store – 'Warenhaus'. The authors were taken to court but released without charge when the judge decided that while this was an incitement to arson, it had been satirical in intent and without success. Of course, the following year, the commune's 'unsuccessful' provocation would put into practice by Baader and Ensslin.

While I do not intend to propose a direct link between the idealistic protest movement of the 68ers and the violence of the armed struggle which followed in its wake, this brief sketch demonstrates that points of intersection do exist. But this is hardly surprising given that the RAF emerged from the same generational backdrop. Therefore, in order to further contextualise the RAF, one must first rehearse, albeit in brief, the wider set of circumstance and protest movements out of which the terrorist aberration emerged. Furthermore, in so far as the texts considered in this study address the terrorism of the 1970s directly, several of the post-unification terrorism films are as much concerned with the legacy of the '68 which has become increasingly contested in light of subsequent generations who are jostling for position in the Berlin Republic. Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* and Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, in particular, establish a dialogue not just with urban militant violence but with the impact of the protest generation. The rest of this first chapter will therefore necessarily review the details surrounding the German student movement and the first generation of the RAF before, in part two, considering the shifting social context surrounding the RAF for filmmakers since unification.

The German student movement³

1968 is today still recognized the world over as the year of the student, that historical moment which symbolizes the political awakening of a hitherto ostensibly apolitical generation, and a period, albeit brief, when anything seemed possible. However, as Ingo Cornils asserts, ‘while the importance of the cultural revolts of the 60s is acknowledged in the USA, Great Britain and France, it is only in Germany that ‘1968’ has come to be seen as a “decisive caesura in post-war development.”’⁴

The student movement stood at the vanguard of the 68er revolt. Initially, student protest was rooted in a programme of reforms that began in the universities, which were ill-equipped to accommodate the massive number of students that had resulted through the postwar lack of a *numerus clausus*: overcrowding in lecture halls and student accommodation, and a shortage of teaching staff were, the students complained, threatening their progress. Beyond the quality of their educations, the students were also concerned by the ethos of these institutions, seeing the universities as elitist, ‘hierarchical, authoritarian places in which a small minority of those involved, the professors, had all the power’, as Pól O’Dochartaigh recounts.⁵ As early as 1961, the SDS’s memorandum *Hochschule in der Demokratie*, which Rob Burns and Wilfred van der Will regard ‘as one of the inaugural documents of the student protest movement’, argued for wide reaching reforms ‘which would fortify democracy and anti-authoritarian

³ For a more detailed overview of the student movement as well as the wider groupings of protest movements in West Germany during the 1960s see Nick THOMAS, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Rob BURNS and Wilfred VAN DER WILL, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany: Extra Parliamentary Opposition and the Democratic Agenda* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1988) and Sabine VON DIRKE ‘All Power to the Imagination!’: *the West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997)

⁴ Ingo CORNILS. ‘The German Student Movement: Legend and Legacy’, *Debatte*, Vol.4 / No.2 (1996), pp. 36-62 (37)

⁵ Pól O’DOCHARTAIGH, *Germany since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). p. 95.

attitudes', and grant the students a role in defining the academic curriculum.⁶ Moreover, the concerns revealed in this context were thought to be reflective of wider social ills. As Nick Thomas maintains, the students used 'university reform as a springboard from which to launch an attack upon capitalist society' which, under the wide net cast by the *Faschismusvorwurf*, and influenced by the Frankfurt School's revitalization of prewar communist doctrines, was viewed as an oppressive totality which supported the dominance of the hegemonic order at the cost of individual needs.⁷ As such, the students had become increasingly sceptical of 'the growing subjugation of the university to the needs of business and industry' as Sabine von Dirke notes.⁸ In the eyes of the students the universities had become mechanisms of conformity that were intended to produce the country's future obedient economic and industrial elites, and thus support the existing structures rather than foster critical thinkers capable of formulating ideological alternatives. As Burns and van der Will put it, in the opinion of the students 'academic honours now merely bestowed the dubious privilege of becoming a cog in the wheels of the state administration or some vast capitalist enterprise.'⁹

Thus the students wanted to clean away 'den Muff von Tausend Jahren', which they alleged was not only to be found under the professors' gowns but also symptomatic of Germany's wider social character.¹⁰ Indeed, this satirical invocation of Hitler's bloated claims of a thousand-year Reich championed one of the major preoccupations of the postwar 'generation of 68', namely dealing with the burden of the Nazi past which had

⁶ BURNS and VAN DER WILL, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany*, p. 104.

⁷ THOMAS, *Protest Movements*, p. 60.

⁸ VON DIRKE, 'All Power to the Imagination!', pp. 36-37.

⁹ BURNS and VAN DER WILL, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany*, p. 105.

¹⁰ The slogan 'Unter den Talaren, der Muff von Tausend Jahren' adorned protest banner at Germany universities. See Burkhard SPINNEN, 'Helmut B., Jahrgang', in Christiane LANDGREBE and Jörg PLATH (eds.), *'68 und die Folgen: Ein unvollständiges Lexikon* (Argon: Berlin, 1998), pp. 44-48, in particular p. 44 for a photograph of such a banner.

largely gone unacknowledged during the entire reconstruction phase. Again, the situation in the universities acted as a miniature copy of society: many of the older professors had been active members of Hitler's Nazi party yet reinstated nonetheless following the allies' less than comprehensive programme of 'denazification' in the immediate postwar years. For the students, not only had the legacy of National Socialism *not* been dealt with, but echoes of it, even direct continuities, they claimed, continued to inform the thinking and actions of a dominant parent culture that had alleged to have broken from its horrendous past; the trajectory of postwar 'democracy' in the Federal Republic, the students argued, was still predicated on the authoritarian patterns of behaviour that had been integral to its fascist prehistory. The immediate postwar generation's *Fachismusvorwurf* would shape both the activism of the student generation as well as the terrorist response during the seventies.

The Nazi past: *Wirtschaftswunder* and the 'domestic terror' of repression in the 1950s.

Historical overviews are, by and large, in agreement that postwar Germany systematically avoided confronting the Nazi past as far as was possible. In the immediate aftermath of the war the German populace was engaged not in reflection on its role in the Third Reich but in the day-to-day conditions of survival. As the social historian Mary Fulbrook suggests, 'working for the present and the future was more important – and certainly more productive – than raking over the ashes of the past. The main point was to rebuild, not sort through the ruins.'¹¹ This process was achieved with astonishing speed and success. West Germany's emulation of the capitalist democracy of its ideological saviour, the United States, became the catalyst for the fairy-tale success story of the

¹¹ Mary FULBROOK, *History of Germany 1918-2000: The Divided Nation*, 2nd edn. (Blackwell: Oxford, 2002), p. 150.

‘economic miracle’ or *Wirtschaftswunder*, which allowed the country to rise from the rubble of the reconstruction period at an unprecedented rate; by 1954 Germany occupied the third position in world trade, trailing only behind America and Great Britain. As Sabine von Dirke notes, ‘the “economic miracle” had mobilized the good old German virtues of discipline and industriousness and turned society quickly into one big consumer club. “Wealth for everyone!” became its slogan.’¹² But even as the economy and living conditions stabilized, the past was not a subject that was returned to. To cite Fulbrook once more:

If the Hitler-period was considered at all, it was more or less dismissed as an isolated aberration in German history when a madman unfortunately took over the country and misled the poor German people, leading them into a war and committing atrocities in their name about which they had known nothing.¹³

The most famous interpretation of the largely repressed Nazi past came from the psychologists Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich who explained the collective denial over the horrendous Nazi past in terms of an ‘inability to mourn’. According to the Mitscherlichs, the identification with Hitler had been such that the recognition of his loss would have been an irrevocable blow to the collective postwar German identity.¹⁴ A prevailing collective amnesia was read as engulfing the memory of the Nazi past which would have stood in the way of the satisfaction of the country’s rehabilitation, a process which symbolically seemed to reach completion when, against all odds, Germany won the football World Cup in 1954.

¹² VON DIRKE, ‘*All Power to the Imagination!*’, p. 13.

¹³ Mary FULBROOK, *History of Germany 1918-2000*, p. 150.

¹⁴ See Alexander and Margarete MITSCHERLICH, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern. Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens*, (Munich: Piper, 1967).

The 1950s represent the main decade of socialization for the children who would become the 68ers, and during this time, the war generation's progeny was, by and large, 'protected' from the Nazi past. As von Dirke asserts, 'those who went to school during the 1950s and 1960s were drilled on history from Greek to Roman antiquity to the glory days of the Holy Roman Empire. One short period of German history remained, however, conspicuously absent – that from 1933 to 1945.'¹⁵ Although the affluence of postwar German society meant that the children were spared the poverty and unsanitary conditions that had characterized the immediate reconstruction phase, they were also being denied the opportunity to grasp the enormity of the immediate past. As we shall see in Chapter 3, this period comes under scrutiny in von Trotta's exploration of urban terrorism in *Die bleierne Zeit*. At the same time however, such attempts to exorcise the memory of the Nazi past from the collective social psyche were contrasted by the very visceral spectre of reintegrated former Nazis, thus providing evidence of a continuity between the young democracy of the Federal Republic and the fascist past in public life. This association would later inflame the students' claims that 1945 had hardly been the *Stunde null* that many had proclaimed. The allies stood accused of only having paid lip-service to the programme of denazification which had failed in its intended function of weeding out the lasting vestiges of the 'rotten' past. Neither had these *alt-Nazis* come solely from the ranks of the quiet conformists; many, such as Adenauer's chief aide during the reconstruction phase, Hans Globke (who had authored the official interpretation of the 1935 Nuremberg Race Laws), had been counted among the ideologically committed proponents of the Third Reich. In stark contrast to the vocal opponents of the Third Reich who would find their career paths in the Federal Republic

¹⁵ VON DIRKE, *All Power to the Imagination*, p. 14.

limited, ‘Nazi civil-servants were re-employed generously and virtually all Nazis (except the top layer) could continue their careers in the FRG as long as they were willing to support the new political order and remain quiet about their past’, as Stefan Berger observes.¹⁶

Keeping quiet about the past or, to put it another way, the apparent collective amnesia over the Nazi past among the parent generation, was anathema to the postwar children who, although they were either too young to have been implicated in the atrocities of the National Socialist regime or were born after its collapse, nonetheless felt compromised by it. By the early- to mid-1960s the oldest members of the postwar generation were coming of age and were now able to find facts out for themselves. For the parent generation the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1960/61 proved, as Martin Kitchen suggests, ‘an uncomfortable reminder of a past that many hoped would go away’.¹⁷ However, rather than just provide an uncomfortable reminder, the trial in Jerusalem brought the Holocaust home, prompting the ‘Auschwitz Trial’ held in Frankfurt, which began in 1963 and lasted 20 months. The trial raised controversial and difficult debates over complicity with the crimes of the Third Reich not just among top-ranking Nazi officials but the ‘ordinary’ German in the street. For scholars such as Kitchen, the opening of old wounds that the ‘Auschwitz Trial’ prompted is located as the incendiary block for the ‘fierce intergenerational clash’ between the ‘culprit generation’ of parents and their children – it certainly fanned the flames.¹⁸ Around the family dinner

¹⁶ Stefan BERGER, *Inventing the Nation: Germany* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2004), p. 171.

¹⁷ Martin KITCHEN, *A History of Modern Germany: 1800-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 349. For more on the trials held in the 1960s, see, for example, Bernd NAUMANN, *Auschwitz : A Report on the Proceedings Against Robert Karl Ludwig Mulka and Others Before the Court at Frankfurt* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966).

¹⁸ KITCHEN, *A History of Modern Germany*, p 349.

table sons and daughters began interrogating their parents' level of involvement in the crimes of the Third Reich, asking 'what did you do during the war?', thus challenging the war generation's hope that German history had effectively been reset in 1945.

Oppositional incompatibility

Although the desire for reform in the universities would remain a central cause through the anti-authoritarian phase of the student movement in the 1960s, this youth-led revolt quickly left the confines of the campus and took to the streets, developing into a wide-ranging critique of West German society as a whole. Aside from the country's support for the conflict in Vietnam, internal political developments throughout the 1960s generated intense distrust amongst the students. This 1960s had been prefaced by the government's U-turn on the issue of rearmament in the mid-1950s, and then began with the country's first political crisis, the *Spiegel* affair, widely condemned as a 'scandalous attempt to muzzle the free press.'¹⁹ Perhaps more than any other issue, however, it was the formation of a Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD in 1966 which convinced not just the students but other groups of a burgeoning crisis of democracy in West Germany. The formation of the Grand Coalition had not been preceded by an election and left the FDP as the sole, and even then somewhat politically neutered, voice of opposition in the *Bundestag*, holding only 49 parliamentary seats compared to the coalition government's 447. As von Dirke observes, the creation of the Grand Coalition 'epitomised for many citizens, including the students, the dysfunctionality of representational democracy in the Federal Republic', thus leading to the perceived need for opposition outside parliament and so to the creation of the *Außerparlamentarische*

¹⁹ Martin KITCHEN, *A History of Modern Germany*, p. 341.

Opposition (APO) which acted as an umbrella organization for the multitude of diverse protest groups in West Germany.²⁰ The APO viewed the 'Establishment's' Grand Coalition as a means to an end, in so far as it paved the way for the long since proposed Emergency Laws (eventually passed in 1968), which required a two-thirds majority in parliament. For the dissenters, the Emergency Laws resonated uncomfortably with the Nazi past, specifically Hitler's own Emergency or Enabling Laws which had been instrumental in the collapse of the Weimar Republic's fragile democracy. The 1968 laws, if executed, would make the suspension of a wide range of civil liberties legal, but the coalition government failed to specify exactly what kind of national emergency might trigger their implementation. For both the students and the wider members of the APO, the Emergency Laws did not signal democratic security but rather stood as the foundation of a democracy in crisis, and an expression of the Mitscherlich's warning that, if allowed to remain repressed, echoes of Germany's fascist past might persist within the unconscious of the German collective psyche.²¹

The protests against the Emergency Laws mobilized more support within the general public than any other issue, but overall the students found wider public resonance for their cause to be limited, meeting, more often than not, with opposition rather than approval; while the students were concerned that the federal government was undermining democracy through its determination to protect it, in the eyes of an

²⁰ The term APO has come to be used interchangeably with the students over the course of time, but it also counted trade union(ist)s, peace and anti-nuclear campaigners of the 1950s as well as artists and intellectuals among its number, all of whom were united in their criticism of the Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and SPD, its proposed Emergency Laws and the implications that they held for the course of postwar German democracy. As Andrei Markovits and Philip Gorski note, 'the term APO never designated a single organization or tendency. Rather, APO was a loosely constituted negative alliance between a diffuse array of groups united against a shared opponent.' See, Andrei S. MARKOVITS and Philip S. GORSKI, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 47.

²¹ MITSCHERLICH, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*, p. 66.

overwhelming majority it was the students who posed the real threat to the democratic process. Steeped in neo-Marxist rhetoric the students exacerbated anti-communist feelings in West Germany and West Berlin – America’s European bulwark against the communist east. Their protests against a regime they argued was anomic were viewed by public opinion as a direct ‘red’ challenge to the democratic order. As Thomas asserts, ‘the *Bundesrepublik*, a democracy, was seen as the best hope for peace, prosperity and international acceptance. Support for the *Bundesrepublik* therefore meant support for democracy, while criticism of the *Bundesrepublik* was a threat to both stability and, by definition, democracy.’²² Both sides had reached an impasse.

The far-left students sought to transcend this ideological deadlock by constructing themselves as living outside of the society they identified as undemocratic and, in essence, fascistic. They developed a countercultural consciousness which rejected the lifestyle parables of the allegedly corrupt hegemonic norm, breaking from bourgeois paradigms of socialization and re-organising themselves into communal forms of living such as the aforementioned *Kommune I* led by Fritz Teufel and Dieter Kunzelmann, which stood as the most (in)famous example depending on one’s perspective at the time. It is not that the youth had never challenged the authority of the parent generation before, but previous forms of dissent, such as the predominantly male, working-class *Halbstarcken* riots of the 1950s which adopted the wares and rebellious attitudes of American rock ‘n’ roll in an attempt to shock the parents, were neither overtly political, nor did they go beyond subcultural confines. For Rupa Huq ‘subcultures are subordinate but autonomous; there is an acceptance of one’s situation but a simultaneous refusal of it through the adoption of styles that represent a refusal to accept the values of the dominant

²² THOMAS, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*, p. 2.

culture.’²³ This ultimately means, however, that such ‘refusal’ is limited; it can be absorbed by the system it opposes, and its proponents can be reintegrated into the hegemonic order. But not content to just play out their dissatisfaction *within* the system, the student radicals wanted complete autonomy *from* its perceived hold over them. As von Dirke adds, ‘for the antiauthoritarian students, shaking off the shackles of internal repression and external oppression in all its contemporary forms was the preeminent goal.’²⁴ *Kommune I* became the most famous example of a student-based ‘Versuch der Revolutionierung des bürgerlichen Individuums’ which, it was hoped, might lead to ‘die Befreiung von Zwängen der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft.’²⁵ Indeed, in their attempt to liberate themselves from ‘the system’ and develop their own ‘sensibility for life’ or *Lebensgefühl*, the students quickly moved from calling for reform to theorizing ‘the revolution’ which, at its most developed, called for the overthrow of the whole western system of government.

The students’ burgeoning countercultural consciousness created further tensions within the public sphere; their rejection of the parent culture marked them out to those in power as a threat to the stability of the country. As von Dirke suggests, ‘the hegemonic culture had reason to be concerned because of the strategic location of middle-class youth as the future economic, political and intellectual elites.’²⁶ Whereas youth dissent in the 1950s received far more tolerance due its limited subcultural scope, the students’ countercultural demands for change, it was felt, threatened the future prosperity of the country, thus prompting a less measured response from the parent generation. The

²³ Rupa HUQ, *Beyond Subculture: Pop, Youth and Identity in a Postcolonial World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 14.

²⁴ VON DIRKE, *All Power to the Imagination!*, p. 38.

²⁵ This was a common phrase at the time, but which originated as the title of a *Kommune II* document.

²⁶ VON DIRKE, *All Power to the Imagination!*, pp. 29-30.

apparent threat was such that, as von Dirke goes on to add, ‘mainstream culture viewed even explicitly nonpolitical aspects of this middle-class counterculture – for example, a hippie lifestyle – as political and dangerous for its hegemony.’²⁷ For the conservative Springer-owned newspapers such as *Bild* and *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Kommune I*, for example, was viewed as a hippie ‘Horror-Kommune’ in which the sexual excess could barely be seen behind the haze of pot-smoke, an image not helped by Dieter Kunzelmann’s brazen public declaration that ‘Ich arbeite nicht, ich studiere nicht’, and ‘ich habe Orgasmus-Schwierigkeiten, und ich will, daß dies der Öffentlichkeit vermittelt werde.’²⁸ Between their attacks on the country’s democratic credentials and rejection of its cultural norms, the students posed a threat to the collective postwar identity that the nation had forged.

As Cornils notes, ‘the students took to the streets in protest, and discovered that the “establishment”, protected by the police, and the public, hoodwinked by the predominantly Springer-dominated press was against them.’²⁹ This situation would only be further exacerbated as the student movement splintered and left-wing terrorism emerged at the end of the decade. The Springer press, in particular, led a vitriolic campaign against the students, describing them as ‘rowdies’ and ‘communist street fighters’.³⁰ Above all, the press singled out the spokesperson for the SDS, Rudi Dutschke, dubbing him the ‘rote Rädelsführer Rudi’.³¹ Dutschke was also the student movement’s chief ideologue. The development of a countercultural consciousness paralleled a shift in

²⁷ VON DIRKE, ‘*All Power to the Imagination!*’, p. 29.

²⁸ Cited in Jillian BECKER, *Hitler’s Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Gang* (London: Granada, 1978), pp. 39 and 42 respectively.

²⁹ CORNILS, ‘The German Student Movement: Legend and Legacy’, p. 42.

³⁰ THOMAS, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*, p. 116.

³¹ Ingo CORNILS, ‘“The Struggle Continues”: Rudi Dutschke’s Long March’, in Gerard J. Degroot (ed.), *Student Protest: The Sixties and After* (New York & London: Longman, 1998), pp. 100-114 (107). See also for a critical portrait of Dutschke.

the students' campaign; the desire to reform their world changed to a desire to replace it, to revolutionize it. Supported by other figureheads of the SDS such as Bernd Rabehl, Dutschke would work tirelessly to become the voice of the student revolt which he felt would stand at the vanguard of a general revolt.

Theorizing '68: Herbert Marcuse and the student movement

Scholars are generally in agreement that it was the renowned social theorist and philosopher Herbert Marcuse who, more than any other, inspired and helped sustain the student movement, particularly its anti-authoritarian phase in the second half of the 1960s. Marcuse had remained uncompromised by National Socialism, having taken exile from the Nazis in the United States where his ideas developed popular currency. It is worth taking a more detailed look at Marcuse's contribution to the development of the student movement, not least because the student worldview that he influenced is reinvoked in Hans Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, and so will be of particular pertinence to our later reading of that film.

The theorists of the student movement were particularly compelled by Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964). As Douglas Kellner maintains, 'for the New Left, *One-Dimensional Man* articulated what young radicals felt was wrong with society, and the book's dialectic of liberation and domination provided a framework for radical politics which struggled against domination and for liberation.'³² Specifically, Marcuse argues that advanced industrial societies are characterized by their 'democratic unfreedom',

³² Douglas KELLNER, 'Introduction to the Second Edition', in Herbert MARCUSE, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 2nd Edn. (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. xi-xxxviii (xxxv).

itself ‘a token of technical progress.’³³ According to Marcuse’s theorem, the masses are diverted from their suffering and in effect duped into remaining loyal to ‘the system’ through its ability to simultaneously create and satisfy imaginary or ‘false’ material needs, a progression that is itself a token of the increased affluence afforded by the advances of ‘technological reality, which extend(s) liberty while intensifying domination’.³⁴

The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food, and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers and, through the latter, to the whole. The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its own falsehood.³⁵

This ‘false consciousness’, proliferated through the satisfaction of ‘false’ needs, safeguards the status quo because it diverts the masses from their ‘true consciousness’, namely the ‘free development of human needs and faculties.’³⁶ As a result the masses are most likely to militate *against* qualitative change because they are pressed in an authoritarian way to recognize their interests, false as they may be, in the needs of ‘the whole’, that is, the hegemonic system. The condition of the masses’ existence is that of profound ‘unfreedom’ because they remain ‘products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression.’³⁷ True economic freedom, Marcuse argues, ‘would mean freedom *from* the economy, and not economic satisfaction within it.’ Similarly, ‘political

³³ Herbert MARCUSE, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Routledge: London, 1964), p. 1.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 72

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 12.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. ix.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 5.

freedom would mean liberation of the individuals from politics over which they have no effective control' and not least 'intellectual freedom', and thus the ability to recognise one's true consciousness, 'would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of "public opinion" together with its makers.'³⁸ Spurred on by this diagnosis, the students' attempt to develop a countercultural *Lebensgefühl* was an endeavour toward individual liberation from the conditions outlined by Marcuse. The fact that the students' desire for radical change and far-reaching collective liberation represented a minority voice within society was equally explained away under these same conditions - the masses, the students argued, were kept in an unconscious state by the repressive totality of state capitalism and its apparatus, particularly the Springer press.

In their attempt to 'beat the system', the students perceived the need to be 'imaginative.' The slogan *Phantasie an die Macht!*, or *All Power to the Imagination!*, became the new mantra because imagination, it was felt, might hold a progressive function and so the utopian promise of emancipation from social structures, perceived as a suffocating totality.³⁹ A student of sociology in West Berlin, Rudi Dutschke stood at the forefront of theorizing the revolution for the far left, locating the political tactic of passive provocation, a step up from pacifism and the traditional protest demonstration such as banner marches, as the first phase of the revolutionary struggle.⁴⁰ The problem identified with prescribed forms of protest was that they had been co-opted by what Marcuse termed elsewhere as 'the repressive tolerance' of the hegemonic system. For

³⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

³⁹ For a detailed exploration of the importance of 'Phantasie' to the antiauthoritarian phase of the student movement, see von DIRKE, '*All Power to the Imagination!*', pp. 37-43. We will return to this subject in greater depth in Chapter 8.

⁴⁰ See 'Rudi Dutschke in Prag: Liberalisierung oder Demokratisierung?', *Konkret*, May 1968, p. 22.

Marcuse ‘the exercise of political rights’, such as traditional protest-demonstrations, ‘in a system of total administration serves to strengthen this administration by testifying to the existence of democratic liberties which, in reality, have changed their content and lost their effectiveness.’ In Marcuse’s argument such ‘freedoms’ become ‘an instrument for absolving servitude.’⁴¹ In effect, the students had previously been playing a part in a game, the rules of which they in fact wanted to rewrite. To march down the street in a way allowed by the regime was, as Diedrich Diederichson suggests, evoking Ken Kesey’s Vietnam Day Committee speech, ‘denen ihr Spiel zu spielen.’⁴²

Nonetheless ‘convinced that the capitalist system as a whole could eventually be brought down,’ the students, as Cornils notes, ‘argued that they had first to destroy the foundations of state authority in order to ‘unmask’ the state as an instrument of oppression and demonstrate its vulnerability.’⁴³ In their attempt to find progressive forms of protest which did not in fact serve the interests of the powers they sought to challenge, the student’s deployed more imaginative tactics which ranged from the concept of ‘limited rule infringement’ which might entail, as Burns and van der Will note, ‘a sudden deviation from a prescribed demonstration route’, to sit-ins and teach-ins.⁴⁴ But *Kommune I* led the charge in this regard. Here political discussion met with the unabashed release of libidinal energies – defined by Marcuse as ‘the energy of Life Instincts’ – in the fight against the repressive reality principle.⁴⁵ The form of protest advanced by the commune might go some way to explaining why Dutschke was less

⁴¹ Herbert MARCUSE, ‘Repressive Tolerance’, in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 81-123 (84).

⁴² Diedrich DIEDERICHSON, *Sexbeat*, Neuausgabe (Köln: Kippenheuer & Witsch, 2002. first published 1985), p. 18.

⁴³ CORNILS, “‘The Struggle Continues’”. p. 102.

⁴⁴ BURNS and VAN DER WILL. *Protest and Democracy in West Germany*, p. 109.

⁴⁵ MARCUSE. *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 76.

willing to distance himself from its sardonic practitioners as the SDS had done. *Kommune I* pioneered the concept of the *Spaßguerilla* and its imaginative, unpredictable and satirical ‘political happenings’ were, at the very least, provocative. Aside from the aforementioned incitement to arson and the numerous pamphlets that the members produced which served an agit-prop function, *Kommune I* unleashed controversy through its ‘assassination attempt’ on the US Vice-President Hubert Humphrey. During a state visit in 1967 members of the commune planned to pelt Humphrey with custard-filled ‘bombs’ as a protest against the war in Vietnam. When the populist daily newspaper *Bild* caught wind of the plan and carried the sensationalist headline ‘Geplant: Berlin – Bombenanschlag auf US-Vizepräsidenten’, the commune was raided by the police which, to its embarrassment, discovered the real ingredients in the ‘explosives’.⁴⁶ Ulrike Meinhof, still a respected left-wing journalist at the time, wrote of the situation: ‘Nicht Napalmbomben auf Frauen, Kinder und Greise abzuwerfen, ist demnach kriminell, sondern dagegen zu protestieren’, concluding ‘Napalm ja, Pudding nein.’⁴⁷ This taunting of authority brought ridicule upon the police and served the aims of passive provocation well.

Imaginative forms of protest which sought to overcome the chains of repression notwithstanding, the stalwart of the socialist model of socio-economic upheaval, the revolutionary proletariat, was sorely lacking. Again, in Marcuse the students located the problem and the potential solution. As Sabine von Dirke notes ‘*One-Dimensional Man* explains why Marx’s revolutionary subject, the proletariat, failed, while at the same time exonerating it. Hence Marcuse does not have to give up the idea of revolutionary change

⁴⁶ Cited in AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 48.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

but shifts the focus of the struggle.’⁴⁸ The students saw themselves, when not as direct agents of change, then certainly as central to its advent. According to Marcuse, the ‘increased standard of living’⁴⁹ that characterized advanced industrial society had eroded the proletariat’s Marxist status as an agent of historical change because he no longer represented the ‘determinate negation of capitalism.’⁵⁰ The gross exploitation of the working classes that had characterized early industrial societies and formed the objective basis for revolution had been eroded. In effect the worker, under advanced capitalism, had been interpolated by the system and was now also immune to its falsehood. However, Marcuse does not give up the hope of a ‘great refusal’ of ‘the whole’, or ‘system’. Inspired by the black civil rights movement in the United States, Marcuse’s hope for change in contemporary society shifts to the margins, specifically to: ‘the outcasts and the outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable’ who ‘exist outside the democratic process’ and suffer most under the conditions of advanced industrial society. Thus, for Marcuse ‘their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not’, because ‘their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system.’⁵¹

Opinion is split on exactly how the students saw themselves with regard to this location of revolutionary potential. For Cornils, through their persecution at the hands of the media and their wider disaffection, the students saw themselves as one of Marcuse’s marginal groups, whereas von Dirke suggests that they refrained from identifying

⁴⁸ VON DIRKE, ‘*All Power to the Imagination!*’, p. 46.

⁴⁹ MARCUSE, *One-Dimensional Man*, p. x.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 256-57.

themselves as marginalized.⁵² Whatever the case, they certainly sought to act as a catalyst for change. Drawing on Marcuse's *Randgruppentheorie*, beyond their own attempts to reveal the repressive tolerance of the system and achieve enlightenment through provocation they targeted those on the margins, specifically the working-class victims of mass unemployment, the first sign of the fallibility of the 'economic miracle'. in 1967. Because the students possessed an 'anticipatory consciousness' they occupied, as von Dirke suggests, 'an avant-garde position' and so set about radicalizing workers through reading groups and the infiltration of factories.

Benno Ohnesorg, Rudi Dutschke and escalation

The above outlines the main issues and the theoretical underpinning to student activity during the anti-authoritarian phase of the movement in the latter half of the 1960s. Although, as already noted, I do not propose to suggest the terrorism of the RAF which dominated the political climate in West Germany in the 1970s should be read as a direct continuation of student protest, the socio-political conditions which informed its project echoed those underpinning the 68er movement, even if the methods differed. As well as informing our readings of post-unification filmic interventions of the RAF it will also facilitate a better understanding of the terrorists themselves, setting them in the context of a nascent, largely non-violent climate of protest which shared similar, if not the same, concerns.

Violence against the students accompanied the zenith of the anti-authoritarian movement in the twilight years of the 1960s. As Burns and van der Will suggest 'the taunting of authority by non-violent means of argument, demonstration and symbolic

⁵² See CORNILS, 'The Struggle Continues', p. 106; VON DIRKE, '*All power to the Imagination!*', p. 47.

action [...] designed to create contexts of political enlightenment, had obviously produced a situation where the patience of authority – or of individual members of the executive – could snap at any time.’⁵³ On June 2 1967 this taught patience finally ran out and the student movement gained its first martyr when first-time demonstrator Benno Ohnesorg was shot and fatally wounded by the police during a demonstration against the Shah of Iran and his wife’s state visit to West Berlin. The desire to unmask the oppressive nature of the state had on this fatal occasion demonstrated not its vulnerability but, for the students, its oppressive strength, its willingness to use any means necessary to silence dissent. The then Mayor of Berlin, pastor Heinrich Albertz, levelled the blame for the shooting squarely at the feet of the students. The formation of demonstrations was banned but the following day a group of students assembled on Berlin’s famous Ku’damm in defiance of the ban to protest against the shooting and to call for Albertz’s resignation. Among them was the sometime-student and later RAF luminary Gudrun Ensslin, who famously decried those in power in a feverous, hardened rhetoric typical of the eventual urban terrorists: ‘dieser faschistische Staat ist darauf aus, uns alle zu töten. Wir müssen Widerstand organisieren. Gewalt kann nur mit Gewalt beantwortet werden. Dies ist die Generation von Auschwitz – mit denen kann man nicht argumentieren!’⁵⁴

Recently, Ensslin’s proclamation here has been used to suggest a more concrete link between the student movement and the terrorism of the RAF, to be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. Gerd Koenen’s *Das rote Jahrzehnt* (2001) locates the ‘red decade’ of its title between the historical nexus of the events of June 2 1967 and the Stammheim suicides of October 18 1977, at the height of the ‘German Autumn’. For

⁵³ BURNS and VAN DER WILL, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany*, p. 109.

⁵⁴ Cited in AUST, *der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 60.

Koenen the shots fired on these dates ‘markieren unzweifelhaft einen dramatischen Zyklus von Stimmungen, Losungen, Bewegungen und Aktionen, die eine “politische Generation” geformt haben, auch wenn nur ein kleiner Teil der Altersgenossen tatsächlich aktiv involviert war.’⁵⁵ While the extent of the student movement’s influence on the RAF is still debated, the concept of violence was certainly an option in Dutschke’s thinking. Beyond translating Ernesto Che Guevara’s ‘Mensaje a la Tricontinental’ – which called for the war in Vietnam to be brought home to its supporters in the West – for the 1968 SDS Vietnam Conference, Dutschke’s flirtation with violence is well documented; from wheeling explosives around West Berlin in his new-born son’s pram, which has since come to be seen as a humorously macabre incident, to his adaptation of Guevara’s focus theory to the European metropolises, in his attempt to theorise the revolution. However, as scholars such as Cornils maintain, ‘while Guevara’s programme could be seen as a blueprint for the Red Army Faction [...], Dutschke was perfectly aware of the fine line between provocation and actual violence against the state.’⁵⁶ The RAF was just as aware of this line, but within its own logic it was perfectly justified in crossing it.

The Red Army Faction

The RAF’s ideological statements were terse adaptations of the political project that had informed the utopian outlook of the 1960s, often divorced from political realities and providing simplistic, dogmatic conclusions. The apparent legitimacy of the group’s turn to violence was, however, clear. By the RAF’s logic the students had not gone far enough, and had even been guilty of capitalist decadence by privileging the individual in the pursuit of societal liberation. The RAF, on the other hand, was a collective voice, a

⁵⁵ Gerd KOENEN, *Das rote Jahrzehnt* (Kiepenheuer und Witsch: Köln, 2001), p. 9.

⁵⁶ CORNILS, ‘The Long Struggle’, p. 106.

militant singularity that would bring about 'the revolution' by arming itself. Even though Marcuse's 'objective' determinants of the revolution, the working class, were still lacking in postwar German society, the RAF believed that the 'armed struggle' would serve the catalytic function of breaking the identification of the masses with the 'system', prompting them to join the fight to overthrow the 'corrupt', 'fascist' structures of western government. However, this confidence was misplaced. Although the RAF attracted sympathy for its aims, its tactic of extreme violence denied the group the wide-scale support that it required to achieve its goal. This complicated the position of the New Left. As von Dirke points out, 'for one, the first RAF terrorists belong(ed) to the generation of the student movement. Second, the left had to develop a strategy of how to reject emphatically the terrorists' use of violence without denouncing the political project behind it, with which most of the counterculture sympathised.'⁵⁷

Indeed, the political project behind the RAF at least suggested a 'family resemblance' to the 68er movement, which would become increasingly uncomfortable for the moderate left. Shared concerns such as the war in Vietnam, consumer culture, which was now elevated to part of an 'international fascist capitalist conspiracy', and the perceived capitalist exploitation of the Third World would provide the rallying points for the RAF's turn to terror.⁵⁸ American Imperialism was identified as the RAF's 'Hauptfeind' and many of its actions targeted US barracks on West German soil. West Germany was, initially at least, implicated through its support for the perceived 'war of genocide' in Vietnam and the wider capitalist exploitation of the Third World. Seemingly answering Guevara's call to bring the Vietnam conflict home to those who supported it,

⁵⁷ VON DIRKE, '*All Power to the Imagination!*', p. 91.

⁵⁸ See THOMAS, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*. p. 202.

the RAF declared in one of its earlier statements: 'für die Ausrottungsstrategien von Vietnam sollen Westdeutschland und Westberlin kein sicheres Hinterland mehr sein.'⁵⁹ Under 'West Germany' the RAF did not just mean the more abstract notion of the state as a whole. The group also viewed individual state representatives and functionaries as legitimate targets, whom it identified as 'character masks' of the apparently corrupt 'system'. Alongside the assassination of the industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer, within its complete history (up to the group's dissolution in 1998) the RAF also targeted representatives of the state from members of the judiciary, the Federal Prosecutor Siegfried Buback, to the chairman of the Deutsche Bank Alfred Herrhausen and the police officers, deemed 'neofascist pigs,' who were engaged in hunting the terrorists down.

The political legitimacy of the RAF was contested from the outset. The group's first action – the jail break of Baader in 1970 – preceded its first ideological statement by almost a year. At the time there was little to suggest that the freeing of Baader, spearheaded by Ensslin and Meinhof, was anything other than the act of a band of outlaws which resulted in an institute worker, Georg Linke, being critically wounded by a gun shot to the stomach. The headlines in the press the following day certainly reflected the 'criminal' nature of the endeavour. Leading the charge, the Springer press dubbed them the 'Baader-Meinhof-Bande' in an attempt to stress their bass criminal nature. Even when the group rechristened itself as the Red Army Faction the following year in an attempt to stress the political legitimacy of its endeavour, this epithet stuck. The West German government would remain steadfast in its refusal to recognize the terrorists as

⁵⁹ RAF, 'Anschlag auf das Hauptquartier der US-Armee in Frankfurt/Main', in Oliver TOLMEIN, *Von Deutschen Herbst zum 11. September. Die RAF, Der Terrorismus und der Staat* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 2002), p. 143.

anything other than common criminals throughout its battle against urban terrorism. In 1971, following a confrontation between the police and two RAF members, Astrid Proll and Manfred Grashof, a state-wide manhunt for the terrorists began in earnest which, as Aust notes, even at this early stage was characterized by an air of hysteria.⁶⁰ This hysteria surrounding the manhunt for the RAF escalated into a witch hunt that extended to the indirect threat of RAF-sympathisers, or ‘Sympathisanten’, a term which categorized a diverse and disparate cross-section of citizens, from anonymous members of the public who harboured terrorist fugitives to artists and intellectuals who expressed sympathy with the group’s aims, even if not with its violence.⁶¹ The mounting terrorist frenzy was, as Varon suggests, all in the name: ‘Bernhard Vogel, the CDU Ministerpräsident of Nordrhein-Westfalen, commented that a sympathiser “could be anyone who says Baader-Meinhof group [Gruppe], instead of Baader-Meinhof gang [Bande]”, because the former, it was felt, granted the terrorists political legitimacy and thus betrayed a degree of solidarity.’⁶² Even at this early stage, the state’s singling out and harsh treatment of suspected sympathisers in its determination to apprehend the terrorists gave rise to concerns that the state might be undermining the democracy it claimed to be protecting against the terrorist threat and that such a tactic might in fact lead to an escalation in violence. Certainly, in a *Spiegel* series with the title ‘Mord beginnt beim bösen Wort’, the word ‘Sympathisant’ was denounced as ‘Sprachknüppel des politischen Kampfes.’⁶³

⁶⁰ AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 140.

⁶¹ For more on the topic of the ‘Sympathisanten’, see Hanno BALZ, ‘Der “Sympathisanten”-Diskurs im Deutschen Herbst’, in K. WEINHAEUER, J. REQUATE, H.-G. HAUPT (eds.) *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren* (Frankfurt & New York: Campus Verlag, 2006), pp. 320-350.

⁶² VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 259.

⁶³ Cited in Andreas MUSOLFF, ‘Terrorismus im öffentlichen Diskurs der BRD: Seine Deutung als Kriegsgeschehen und die Folgen’, in WEINHAEUER, REQUATE, HAUPT (eds.) *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren*, pp. 302-319 (313).

The author Henrich Böll had responded to such fears in an article also published in *Spiegel*, 'Will Ulrike Meinhof Gnade oder freies Geleit?'⁶⁴ Böll's controversial article centred on *Bild's* sensationalist and apparently precognitive reporting of a bank robbery, the headline for which ran: *Baader-Meinhof-Bande mordet weiter*. However, at the time of publication, RAF involvement in the robbery was only suspected by the police and so was far from conclusive. For Böll, *Bild's* reporting practices were a clear 'Aufforderung zur Lynchjustiz', a catalyst for the terrorist hysteria which was gripping the country. An early indication of suspected media/state collusion, Böll suggested that for politicians to give interviews to such unscrupulous newspapers was 'nicht mehr kryptofaschistisch, nicht mehr faschistoid, das ist nackter Faschismus.' Pointing to the overstated threat that the RAF posed, Böll called for a sense of proportion in an increasingly reactionary climate, famously attacking the 'Krieg von 6 gegen 60 Millionen.' While he did not condone the terrorism of Meinhof and her few comrades, he called for reason, for a fair trial and even an indication that, if former Nazis had been reintegrated into postwar society, it might in fact be permissible to grant the RAF a role in the political process. Above all, he warned that if a more reasoned approach was not taken 'es wird auch weiter stinken in der deutschen Publizistik, es wird weiter stinken in der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte.'

For adopting the medial role of the defence opposite *Bild's* prosecution, Böll was immediately branded a RAF-sympathiser, dubbed the 'Großvater der Gewalt' and subjected to defamatory campaign across the tabloids of the Springer-press. The ugly spectre of collusion between the state and the media was to rear its head again when the police searched Böll's home: *Bild* reported on the incident, but several hours before the

⁶⁴ Heinrich BÖLL, 'Will Ulrike Meinhof Gnade oder freies Geleit?'. *Der Spiegel*, January 10 1972.

search actually took place. From anonymous members of the public to artists and intellectuals (Marcuse was similarly attacked as an ‘ideological instigator’ of the RAF’s turn to terror, but was better protected, if only owing to the distance from events that living in California afforded), RAF-sympathisers were ‘public enemy number 2’ to the direct threat of the actual terrorists. The Interior Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher commented at the time that the RAF ‘cannot exist without sympathisers, as the group itself says: the sympathisers are the water in which the guerillas swim. They must not have this water.’⁶⁵ Between the publication of Böll’s polemic in 1972 and the height of terrorist activity during the ‘German Autumn’ in 1977, the state’s punitive attempts to pollute this water would do little to lessen fears over the erosion of democratic values in the Federal Republic, pointing to an authoritarian character which had informed the fascism of Hitler’s Germany.

The centrality of the Nazi past to the terrorism of the RAF has formed the bedrock of psychological assessments of the group, whereby the urban terrorism experienced by West Germany in the 1970s is seen as the fatal culmination of the intense generational conflict between the immediate postwar generation and the totemic failure of its parents, the so-called culprit generation or, in the more inflammatory rhetoric of Ensslin, ‘die Generation von Auschwitz.’ As Varon suggests:

the RAF sought to punish Germany for the sins of that [fascist] past and for what it saw as their repetition in the present through such things as police repression and German support for American ‘genocide’ in Vietnam. Here the RAF practiced a logic of vilification, in which it equated the political and judicial custodians of the Federal Republic with Nazi perpetrators.’⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Cited in VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 257.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Next to Varon's 'logic of vilification' sits the view expounded by Anton Kaes that the terrorism of the RAF held a compensatory function:

since members of this generation saw the Federal Republic as the successor of the old fascist state, they violently opposed it- almost as if they wanted to show their parents how they should have battled the fascist state thirty years earlier. Thus they offered belatedly the resistance that their parents had failed to offer.⁶⁷

Thus, the largely repressed trauma of the Nazi past can be read as having returned in the contemporary terror of the RAF. As Kaes goes on to add, 'in their futile struggle against the alleged contemporary "fascist system" of West Germany they symbolically wrestled with the demons of their own past.'⁶⁸

Unsurprisingly, the state viewed the extreme 'antifascist' actions of the RAF in different terms. To cite Varon once more, 'as in the RAF's excesses, the fascist past figures heavily in the state's response. The government and its supporters insisted that the terrorists were the authentic heirs of fascism, who, like the Nazi SA during the Weimar Republic, threatened a fragile democracy.'⁶⁹ As far as the federal government was concerned it was the terrorists who were 'Hitler's children', in the sense ascribed by the South-African journalist Jillian Becker's sensationalist book of the same name.⁷⁰

The RAF, the state and political repression

The banalities of life in the militant underground consumed a great deal of the RAF's revolutionary energy, as the former terrorist Klaus Jünschke would later attest: 'man geht zur Stadtguerilla, und dann bist du dabei, die Wohnung herzurichten, vier Wochen lang, und ewig muß man was einkaufen, die Sachen, die gebraucht werden. Das ist 99 Prozent

⁶⁷ Anton KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Harvard University Press: Harvard, 1989), p. 24.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ VARON, *Bringing the war Home*, p. 14.

⁷⁰ See BECKER, *Hitler's Children*.

dessen, was gemacht wird.’⁷¹ Funding this everyday life in the underground was another focus, with many of the RAF’s early actions involving bank robberies to raise much needed capital, whether for fitting-out safe houses, financing training mission to Jordan, procuring weapons, fake number plates for stolen cars and disguises. The media, however, portrayed these actions as depoliticized criminality.

When the first generation of the RAF did strike with more obvious politically motivated precision it provoked an even greater response from the state which seemed to outweigh the danger posed. Throughout May of 1972 the RAF unleashed a series of attacks on targets identified as representing imperialism and the ‘fascist’ state. On May 11, the same day that the US army mined the harbours of North Vietnam, three pipe bombs exploded at the Fifth US Army Corps stationed at the IG-Farben buildings in Frankfurt am Main, injuring thirteen people and killing an American Lieutenant Colonel. This attack was consolidated on May 24 when car bombs were detonated at the US army’s European headquarters in Heidelberg killing five American soldiers and injuring a further five. On May 12 there had been bomb attacks on both the Augsburg police headquarters and the Munich regional Criminal Investigation office, and on May 15 an explosive device attached to the car of Federal Judge Budenberg went off when the car’s key was turned in the ignition. Not the intended target, however, but his wife was at the wheel. Also, on May 19 a bomb went off in the Springer building in Hamburg injuring seventeen people, two seriously. These actions only served to intensify the national manhunt for the RAF. The *Bundeskriminalamt* (BKA), headed by Horst Herold and charged with hunting down Baader and his gang of miscreants, systematically closed sections of motorways, setting up checkpoints and checking the identity of travellers in

⁷¹ Cited in AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, pp. 194-95.

an attempt to flush out the terrorists. The wider public, less convinced of the RAF's credibility in light of the increasing body count incurred in the name of its beliefs, was largely supportive of the measures.

A combination of the BKA's efforts and mistakes made on the part of the terrorists through gradual weariness, by the mid-summer of 1972 the RAF's first generation leading cadre of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, Jan-Carl Raspe and Holger Meins had all been apprehended. However, terrorism in the Federal Republic did not subside but rather intensified. The state's subsequent punitive authoritarian treatment of the captured terrorists, Rachel Palfreyman notes, 'arguably gave rise to an escalation of violence in a new generation of terrorists.'⁷² Over the next five years the RAF's self proclaimed anti-imperialist struggle would seem to take more the tone of a private battle of nerves between itself and the state, as the second generation of the RAF focused its energies and attacks on securing the release of its imprisoned comrades, right up to the failed 'Offensive '77' of the 'German Autumn'.

The conditions of imprisonment attracted widespread attention not just in Germany but abroad. The imprisoned RAF members now declared themselves direct victims of the 'fascist' state, claiming that the conditions of their detention contravened basic human rights and unlawfully ignored their status as political prisoners. Before they were moved to the purpose built Stammheim facility the prisoners were kept in strict isolation from one another and from the rest of the prison community. Ulrike Meinhof endured the 'dead wing' of Cologne's Ossendorf jail where Aust claims she was kept in almost complete acoustic isolation.⁷³ Other measures endured by some or all of the

⁷² PALFREYMAN, 'The Fourth Generation', p. 11.

⁷³ AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 231.

prisoners included heavily restricted family visits and access to lawyers, lights in cells being left on day and night, constant surveillance and searches, both of the cells and the prisoners themselves. The RAF publicly accused the authorities of isolation torture (*Isolationsfolter*) with Meinhof insisting ‘der politischen Begriff für den toten Trakt, Köln, sage ich ganz klar – ist: das Gas’, and Ensslin later adding ‘Unterschied toter Trakt und Isolation: Auschwitz zu Buchenwald. Der Unterschied ist einfach: Buchenwald haben mehr überlebt als Auschwitz... Wie wir drin, ja um das mal klar zu sagen, uns nur darüber wundern können, daß wir nicht abgespritzt werden. Sonst über nichts...’⁷⁴ The state denied the accusations of mistreatment but its handling of the situation nonetheless won the RAF some support from the wider public and medical experts who openly criticised the conditions of imprisonment.⁷⁵ In an attempt to improve their conditions the prisoners launched several hunger strikes, the last of which before the ‘German Autumn’ claimed the life of Holger Meins in 1974. In an attempt to counter these measures the state advocated force-feeding which similarly attracted wide condemnation as an inhumane practice.

Besides furnishing the terrorists with ammunition in the now heightened propaganda war, the state’s treatment of the RAF prisoners and those in the group’s orbit, from the second generation of terrorists still at large to the group’s sympathisers, increasingly raised doubts over its democratic credentials. The newly founded BKA had already instilled fears in the wider populace of a Big Brother state with increased surveillance and the computer-based storage of personal information (which certainly resonated with Marcuse’s fears over technocratic control). In 1972 the

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 292-93.

⁷⁵ See VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, pp. 217-18.

Radikalenerlass/Berufsverbot banned politically non-conformist individuals who were deemed hostile to the democratic aims of the constitution from working in the public sector, thus giving rise to concerns that terrorist violence might be used by those in power as ‘an excuse to denounce all resistance as illegal and dangerous.’⁷⁶ From teaching posts to positions as postmen, from stations in state bureaucracy to driving trains, it was not just suspected terrorists but student demonstrators who found themselves targeted by this decree. As Fulbrook notes, ‘for if they participated in a demonstration, film of this would undoubtedly be available to the police, their names would be logged in police computers, and future employment prospects would be threatened’, adding ‘in some respects, then, the “vigilant defence of democracy” in the Federal Republic served actually to limit and restrict the extent of democracy.’⁷⁷

Restrictions on civil liberties only intensified as the RAF’s leading cadre went to trial at Stammheim. Amidst allegations of conversations between lawyers and their defendants as well as their homes having been bugged, the trial itself was rocked when the presiding judge, Theodor Prinzing, had to resign after allegations of collusion with state prosecutors.⁷⁸ Lawyers accused the state of rewriting the rule book when it tried the RAF. While the state sought to prosecute the RAF as common criminals it nonetheless used the ‘RAF’s politics as a reason to abridge, deviate from, and even dispense with the standards of due process governing normal criminal trials’, to quote Varon.⁷⁹ This put the group’s lawyers in a particularly difficult position. The so-called ‘Baader-Meinhof laws’

⁷⁶ See Ingo CORNILS, ‘Joined at the Hip? The Representation of the German Student Movement and Left-Wing Terrorism in Recent Literature’, in Gerrit-Jan BERENDSE and Ingo CORNILS (eds.), *Baader-Meinhof Returns. History and Cultural Memory of German Left-Wing Terrorism* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2008) (German Monitor), forthcoming. I am grateful to Dr Cornils for giving me an advance copy of his manuscript.

⁷⁷ FULBROOK, *History of Germany*, p. 213.

⁷⁸ See AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, pp. 437-48.

⁷⁹ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 265.

or 'Lex RAF', which amended the criminal code for the purpose of the trial, made it possible to remove a lawyer if, in Aust's words, '[er] *verdächtig* ist, an der Tat, die den Gegenstand der Untersuchung bildet, beteiligt zu sein oder eine Handlung begangen zu haben, die für den Fall der Verurteilung des Beschuldigten Begünstigung, Strafvereitelung oder Hehlerei wäre.'⁸⁰ The new laws also had implications outside of the courtroom. If not direct censorship, then self-censorship motivated by fear became a repressive constriction on the freedom of artists and intellectuals. New laws banned materials which might be deemed to express approval for or to glorify criminal acts, leading to widespread condemnation among cultural commentators such as the filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff following a raid on the Trikont Verlag which was about to publish the former *Bewegung 2. Juni* member Bommi Baumann's autobiography *Wie alles anfing* in 1975. The intention to publish the text came just after the Peter Lorenz kidnapping by Baumann's former comrades, and while the ex-terrorist's autobiography called for an end to terrorist violence it was judged an example of terrorist propaganda by the authorities.⁸¹ The Trikont Verlag was raided and the printing plates for the book confiscated. For Schlöndorff the implications of this for artistic freedom were clear, with the director stating that 'what happened yesterday to Trikont-Verlag can happen tomorrow in any theatre.'⁸² As the second generation of the RAF intensified its campaign the state did not want to promote discussion but rather outlaw the voices of left-wing terrorism, whether

⁸⁰ See AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 322 (my emphasis).

⁸¹ In 1975 another terrorist cell, the *Bewegung 2. Juni*, kidnapped the CDU's mayoral candidate for Berlin, Peter Lorenz, successfully trading him for five of its imprisoned members. The *Bewegung 2. Juni* was an occasional collaborator with RAF throughout the 1970s but its naming of Horst Mahler, credited as the spiritual founder of the RAF and, by this time, essentially a pariah with the RAF, among those to be released is a reflection of the tension that existed between the leadership of the two groups. Nonetheless, the RAF would subsume the *Bewegung 2. Juni* at the end of the decade when both groups attempted to consolidate their losses.

⁸² Cited in VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 263.

the direct voices of the terrorists themselves or the group's manifest 'supporters', even if the increasingly militant brand of democracy it employed to achieve this seemed to stand at odds with the constitutional guarantees it claimed to represent.

The 'German Autumn'

The malaise that had been building since the early 1970s would culminate in the events of the 'German Autumn'. On September 6, 1977, the RAF's 'Offensive '77' began. Second generation members of the group kidnapped the state-industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer (president of the Federal Association of German Employers and the most prominent member on the board of trustees of the Daimler-Benz company), in an attempt to force the release of the surviving members of its first generation cadre – at this point Baader, Ensslin and Raspe – along with eight other RAF-guerillas from Stammheim prison. Schleyer was a particularly apt target for the RAF, serving as a personification of the alleged 'fascist capitalist conspiracy'; having been an active member of the Nazi party and subsequent SS officer, he embodied the perceived continuities between the Federal Republic and its fascist past. However, since the success of the Lorenz kidnapping by the *Bewegung 2. Juni* in 1975 the petrification of political conditions in West Germany and the Federal government's hardened stance meant that a trade was out of the question. The government stalled for time, confident that it could liberate Schleyer and apprehend his captors and, in a bid to aid its search, imposed a media blackout (*Nachrichtensperre*); the national press agency agreed that the press should work with the government to decide what was suitable for public consumption in the media, as well as disclose any direct RAF communiqués to the authorities. But then, in a further bid to force the state's hand, Palestinian Guerrillas, acting out of solidarity with the RAF,

hijacked a German passenger airliner on October 13, eventually diverting it to Mogadishu. A West German anti-terrorist team stormed the plane on October 18, killing the captors and successfully freeing the hostages. When news of the failed attempt broke, Baader, Ensslin and Rapse allegedly committed suicide in their jail cells in Stammheim prison, their hopes of liberation quashed. The fact that both Baader and Raspe were found with guns in their cells generated intense speculation amongst the group's supporters that the apparent suicides were in fact state-sanctioned murders. Nonetheless, the prisoners' apparent decision to take their own lives was seemingly not something with which the state had reckoned. Its gambit had failed and the following day Schleyer was executed by his captors.

A pervasive atmosphere of paranoia, fear and distrust engulfed the public sphere during this tense period which, seemingly bearing out the terrorists' prediction of a destabilized democracy, saw the culmination of the pervasive fear of terrorist attacks and the repressive state measures. For Eike Wenzel:

In einem Zeitraum von nur sieben Wochen hatte sich das Gesicht der Bundesrepublik verändert. Der Staat, der sich von den Schleyer-Entführern und den Luftpiraten herausgefordert sieht, und die Verdächtigungen nicht nur von linker Seite, daß hiermit ein (neuer) Polizeistaat etabliert werde, schaukeln sich gegenseitig hoch. Im Bonner Regierungsviertel patroulieren Panzerwagen. In allen Orten der Bundesrepublik werden Telefonleitungen freigeschaltet, wo Bürger auf auffällige Personen in ihrer Umgebung aufmerksam machen können.

This leads her to suggest that 'niemals, [...], war die Bundesrepublik einem Bürgerkrieg so nahe wie im Herbst 1977.'⁸³ However, despite suspicion that the greatest constitutional threat might not come from the RAF but rather the regime's reaction to the terrorists, the

⁸³ Eike WENZEL, *Gedächtnisraum Film: Die Arbeit an der deutschen Geschichte in Filmen seit den sechziger Jahren* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), p. 243.

West German state undoubtedly emerged as the victor of the conflict. By its own admission, the RAF's 'Offensive '77' had dealt the organization a crushing blow, with the group later conceding: 'Die RAF hatte alles in die Waagschale geworfen und eine große Niederlage erlitten.'⁸⁴ Although the RAF did not disband until 1998, the state reaction to its campaign in the 1970s, through which, as Varon suggests, 'the RAF provoked reactions vastly disproportionate to the violence they unleashed', was not repeated with the same level of intensity in response to the more sporadic acts of terror which continued in to the 1990s through second and third generations of the group.⁸⁵

Why then, was the first generation of the RAF treated as a pollutant that had to be expelled at all costs, even if the state cast its own democratic credentials in doubt in the process? For one, the RAF's insistence over a stark congruence between the Federal Republic and its fascist prehistory posed an intense threat to the collective West German identity which had been founded on its relationship with the democratic process, the very negation of the troublesome Nazi past. To return to Thomas' earlier contention, 'support for the *Bundesrepublik* therefore meant support for democracy, while criticism of the *Bundesrepublik* was a threat to both stability and, by definition, democracy.'⁸⁶ Whereas the student movement enacted a similar challenge to state authority and democratic credentials, its strategy of escalation, although it advocated confrontation, was not as pronounced as the very violent challenge to state power enacted by the terrorists. Rather, although the 68ers sought to illuminate the perceived ruptures in West Germany's historical imagination by bringing the Nazi past to the foreground, the greatest challenge

⁸⁴ RAF, 'Die Abschiedserklärung der Roten Armee Fraktion', in TOLMEIN, *Vom Deutschen Herbst zum 11. September*, p. 216.

⁸⁵ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p.2.

⁸⁶ THOMAS, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*, p. 2.

they posed was to the future economic prosperity of the country that was rooted behind its *Verfassungspatriotismus* (constitutional loyalty), expressed through their development of a counter-cultural lifestyle. The terrorists took this further. Having identified the Federal Republic as politically and morally illegitimate, the RAF's own violent acts challenged the state's *Gewaltmonopol*, that is, as Varon suggests drawing on Max Weber, the state's 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force.'⁸⁷ While, as Klaus Theweleit suggests, an initial 'Pochen des Staats auf sein "Gewaltmonopol"' might have been kindled by the 68er-movement's strategy of escalation, it was the terrorists of the RAF who truly fanned the flames of violent confrontation.⁸⁸ Determined not to repeat the mistakes of Weimar, the state sought to show that democracy did not have to be weak even if the punitive, militant form of democracy that it deployed against the terrorist threat actually appeared to weaken its own democratic credentials, and led to concerns that the state was actually assisting the alleged 'enemies of democracy' in destroying that democracy, when not itself posing the greatest threat. Ultimately, as Varon very usefully posits, 'the "actual" threat the RAF posed was less important than the view of it as an existential threat to the Federal Republic's identity [...], which marked the RAF as a contaminant so strong that it demanded absolute quarantine.'⁸⁹ In Olaf Hoerschelmann's terms, during the 1970s the RAF and the state had become locked in a 'discursive struggle' over German history and West German national identity.⁹⁰ As the 'winners' of the 'German Autumn', the state quickly set about consolidating its military victory with a

⁸⁷ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 272.

⁸⁸ Klaus THEWELEIT, *Ghosts. Drei leicht inkorrekte Vorträge* (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 1998), p. 37.

⁸⁹ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 285.

⁹⁰ Olaf HOERSCHELMANN, 'Memoria Dexter Est': Film and Public Memory in Postwar Germany', *Cinema Journal*, 40: 2. (Winter 2001), pp. 78-98 (87).

discursive victory, setting the terms of remembrance surrounding recent events to support its own perspective. However, this unilateral discursive settlement would not go uncontested.

‘Das kulturelle Gedächtnis’ of the RAF, and the New German Cinema⁹¹

The official memory of the ‘German Autumn’ spoke near unanimously from the perspective of the State. Indeed, as Hoerschelmann makes clear, ‘the example of press coverage of terrorism in the 1970s illustrates that collective memories are always inserted into the power relations of the dominant culture, which tends to structure representational techniques in its favour.’⁹² As we shall see, the victory of the hegemonic order during the ‘German Autumn’, in which the RAF appeared to have been conclusively defeated, was proffered by the state as a cathartic moment which saw the Federal Republic purged of a viral infection that had threatened its identity and stability. As Thomas Elsaesser recalls, as early as the Christmas of 1977, ‘erklärte die deutsche Regierung [...], sie sei zuversichtlich, dass die “terroristische Bedrohung” vorüber sei und das öffentliche Leben wieder “normal” verlaufen werde.’⁹³ The RAF’s leading first generation cadre had been extinguished and now the state did not just appear to hold the monopoly on legitimate uses of violence, but on the representation of recent events also. Furthermore, public sympathy for the terrorists had waned. As Andreas Musolff comments, by the ‘German Autumn’, ‘ein romantisches Image der RAF und der weiteren im Entstehen begriffenen Terrorgruppen’, such as the *Bewegung 2. Juni*, ‘als Widerstandskämpfer [...] wurde aber

⁹¹ For detailed histories of the New German Cinema see for example, Thomas ELSAESSER, *The New German Cinema. A History* (London: bfi, 1989); Anton KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1989); Sabine HAKE, *German National Cinema*.

⁹² HOERSCHELMANN, ‘Memoria Dexter Est’, p. 95.

⁹³ Thomas Elsaesser, *Terror und Trauma: Zur Gewalt des Vergangenen in der BRD* (Kulturverlag Kadmos: Berlin, 2007), p. 51.

durch die immer mehr Todesopfer fordernden Gewaltakte bald zerstört.’⁹⁴ In the case of the RAF in particular, its disregard for innocents in its bid to reach its ‘political’ targets – such as Schleyer’s murdered entourage – had led to widespread condemnation. Throughout what had increasingly looked like a private war between the RAF and the state, the federal government had appealed to its citizens to assert their own morality by denouncing terrorism. As Hoerschelman suggests:

Terrorism as an internal enemy of the nation-state enabled the German media to redefine national consensus. Instead of exposing the ruptures in Germany’s historical imagination, terrorism became the symbolic site for the creation of a more cohesive national community. As a result, the ‘structuring absences’ of Germany’s public memory were increased rather than exposed or reduced.⁹⁵

The RAF’s *Faschismusvorwurf* was thus dismissed as deluded and distorted, an example of the group’s alleged *Realitätsverlust* (loss of reality). With little in the way of public opposition the state was able to stress its own legitimacy and the RAF’s moral and political bankruptcy. The state venerated itself as the valiant defender of a bullet-, or more aptly, bomb-proof democratic system and its ostensibly threatened citizens, and cast the practitioners of the RAF in the pale of monstrous and suicidal criminal murderers, effectively nullifying the terrorist’s diagnosis of West Germany as a thinly veiled continuation of the country’s fascist legacy. As Hoerschelmann adds, ‘in effect, terrorism caused a shutting down of public debate over Germany’s fascist heritage and its collective identity rather than an opening up of that debate.’⁹⁶ A premature line was being drawn under the memory of the RAF which was now being regarded as a matter of

⁹⁴ Andreas MUSLOFF, ‘Terrorismus im öffentlichen Diskurs der BRD: Seine Deutung als Kriegsgeschehen und die Folgen’, in K. WEINHAUER, J. REQUATE, H.-G. HAUPT (eds.) *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren* (Frankfurt & New York: Campus Verlag, 2006), pp. 302-319 (307-8).

⁹⁵ HOERSCHELMANN, “‘Memoria Dexter Est’”, p. 89.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

history, even though the group would not offer itself up for historicisation until its disbandment twenty one years later.

Indeed, although the RAF never truly recovered momentum after the failed 'Offensive '77' it regrouped, attempted to consolidate its losses and returned in 1979. But as discussed above, it never prompted the same intense state response because the existential threat it had posed had been contained, even extinguished. When the RAF returned, the terms of remembrance had long since been set. Hoerschelmann's taxonomy of a 'consensual meaning' surrounding the RAF was expressed in polarized terms of 'them and us' or the binary of Täter/Opfer. One either belonged to the democratic state and its totalizing 'Wir-Gefühl', or was against it. One was either a terrorist perpetrator or a terrorist victim. This discursive reckoning with the immediate memory of the RAF and the 'German Autumn' would have lasting implications for the legacy of the terrorist group in the collective memory of the country. The work on memory discourse by, in particular, Jan Assmann offers a useful methodology with which to further examine the terms of remembrance surrounding the RAF that prompted the intervention of the New German Cinema, and to which we now turn.

The way in which memories are transmitted between generations has become a key concern of recent memory debates. In *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, Jan Assmann distinguishes between what he terms 'Gedächtniskunst' and 'Erinnerungskultur', two functions of the umbrella term 'memory'. 'Gedächtniskunst' focuses on mnemonic feats and allows for the memorizing and recall of facts and figures. Taking the orators of ancient Greece as his example, 'Gedächtniskunst', Assman suggests, 'vermag der

Einzelne, ein ungewöhnliches Maß von Wissen aufzunehmen und bereitzuhalten'.⁹⁷ The notion of what is termed 'memory' as an infallible index card which saves or records the past has, however, long since passed. Instead, the recent boom in memory discourse in the humanities has focused on what Assman terms 'Erinnerungskultur', which is linked to the process of identity formation from the individual to the group level within a given society. For Assmann, 'Erinnerungskultur' is marked by an inherent fallibility, namely the collusion between remembering and forgetting in the endeavour to shape identity. As Anne Fuchs notes, most critics 'view collective memory as a socially engendered and troped master narrative which addresses present identity needs rather than past events.'⁹⁸ Certainly for Assmann, in 'Erinnerungskultur', unlike archival 'Gedächtniskunst', the past is reconstructed from the perspective of the future, that is to say 'Erinnerungskultur' is, above all, not anchored in the past but oriented towards the future: 'wie die Gedächtniskunst zum lernen, so gehört die Erinnerungskultur zum Planen und Hoffen, d.h. zur Ausbildung sozialer Sinn- und Zeithorizonte.'⁹⁹ For example, an individual might tailor the parameters of a story (s)he is relating to meet the requirements of the present situation (group relating it to). The recollection of memory here simultaneously becomes subordinate to the needs of the present situation, reflecting the individual's relationship to the listener(s). Of particular pertinence to our discussion of the role of the RAF in the formation of collective identity in West German society are the two phases of

⁹⁷ Jan ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, 4th edn. (München: Beck, 2002), p. 29.

⁹⁸ Anne FUCHS, 'Towards an ethics of Remembering: The Walser-Bubis Debate and the Other of Discourse', *The German Quarterly*, 75 (2002), pp. 235-46 (235).

⁹⁹ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 31. Assman adds: 'In der Erinnerung wird Vergangenheit rekonstruiert. In diesem Sinne ist die These gemeint, daß Vergangenheit dadurch entsteht, daß man sich auf sie bezieht', *ibid.*

Erinnerungskultur which Assmann identifies as ‘kommunikatives’ (or biographische Erinnerung) and ‘kulturelles Gedächtnis’ (or fundierende Erinnerung).¹⁰⁰

According to Assmann’s theory communicative and cultural memory comprise a group’s collective memory and correspond to the socialization of that group’s members. Although for Assmann, drawing on the work of Maurice Halbwachs, it is a collective’s individual members who ‘have’ memory rather than the ‘collective’ itself, the notion of collective memory is not a metaphoric construct because ‘dieses Gedächtnis immer kollektiv geprägt [ist].’¹⁰¹ Within the collective, communicative memory refers to memories of the recent past. It is characterized by exchange of first-hand, informal memories of the recent past – and so often taking the form of biographical experience – transmitted within the collective to prevent amnesia. This may occur in the form of exchanges in waiting rooms or at a bus stop. It is characterized by the constant shifting of roles between individuals who exchange information, from listening to explaining. Above all this everyday form of communication retains a degree of disorganization and formlessness. Communicative memory lacks a fixed horizon; it has a finite temporality and so after a period of around 80 to (a maximum of) 100 years / three to four generations (when those with first-hand experience of an event begin to die out), communicative memory begins to move into a new phase, that of cultural memory.

Cultural memory is based on second-hand accounts, is formal and requires specialists, namely elite cultural bearers such as intellectuals, politicians and the media, for its transmission. As Caroline Gay succinctly puts it, cultural memory needs “‘props”

¹⁰⁰ Cf. ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*. See. pp. 48-86.

¹⁰¹ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 36.

to keep it alive such as monuments, speeches, books and films.¹⁰² Whereas communicative memory is based on everyday communication ('Alltag'), cultural memory, according to Assmann, 'ist ein Organ der Außeralltäglicher Erinnerung' and has the character of ceremony ('Fest').¹⁰³ Cultural memory 'richtet sich auf Fixpunkte in der Vergangenheit', in its bid to shape a society's understanding of the past at the level of the collective.¹⁰⁴ These 'Fixpunkte' might take the form of past events or symbolic figures, but they always hold a meaning that is favoured by the 'institutionalisierter Mnemotechnik' – of which cultural memory is an instrument – for its reproduction of group identity. Some communicative memories will also become anchored in cultural memory if they favour the desired process of identity formation.

Drawing on Levi Strauss's notion of 'kalte' and 'heiße Gesellschaften', Assman suggests that modern societies' deployment of cultural memory instrumentalises 'Fixpunkte in der Vergangenheit' as 'heiße' or 'kalte Optionen' of remembrance, or a mixture of both. In the 'hot' option fixed points in the past hold the promise of upheaval, becoming the expression of a 'gierigen Bedürfnis nach Veränderung' which internalizes history as a catalyst for development and change. The 'cold' option, on the other hand, internalizes fixed points in history not to effect change but to guard against it at all costs, protecting established and dominant collective wisdom (Weisheit) and group identity.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Caroline GAY, 'On Pride and Other Pitfalls: Recent Debates on German Identity', in Stuart PARKES and Fritz WEFELMEYER (eds.), *Seelenarbeit an Deutschland. Martin Walser in Perspective*, (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2004) (*German Monitor* 60), pp.409-23 (412).

¹⁰³ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁴ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 52

¹⁰⁵ See ASSMANN, pp 68-70. Strauss strictly distinguishes between primitive societies as 'kalt' and civilized, modern societies as 'heiß'. Assmann diverges from this strict binary suggesting that advanced industrial societies can be 'kalt' or 'heiß' or even a mixture of the two when establishing and subsequently regulating cultural memory.

Assmann notes that ‘im Zeichen der kalten Option’, the apparatus of cultural memory and ‘Herrschaftsinstitutionen’, ‘zu Mittel werden [können], Geschichte einzufrieren.’¹⁰⁶

The metaphor of frozen history and the freezing of change is of particular pertinence to our discussion. Specifically, for the filmmakers of the New German Cinema, the terms of remembrance surrounding the immediate memory of the ‘German Autumn’ and the terrorism of the RAF were viewed as having frozen history in a bid to support the interests of the hegemonic order, and so the preservation of its identity, when there was in fact more to be said about the worst political crisis that the young Federal Republic had yet faced. In this final section, I argue that the memory of the events and players of RAF’s failed ‘Offensive ’77’ became one such ‘fixed point’ which was deployed by the state to militate against the revolutionary upheaval which the terrorists programme of urban violence was intended to effect. To this end, we will consider how the memory of the RAF, relegated from everyday communication to be instrumentalised and institutionalized by the federal government with the support of the media, can be read as having taken an exceedingly premature turn to the phase of cultural memory, a turn which the New German Cinema sought to contest.

Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the ‘German Autumn’ it was the status of collective memory in the Federal Republic which seemingly provoked the filmmakers of the New German Cinema, prompting the omnibus film *Deutschland im Herbst* (1977/78), which will be examined in detail in Chapter 2. For the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* it appeared as though large tracts of the communicative memory of the RAF were in danger of being omitted from public memory. Explaining their motivation in print, the film’s contributors stated,

¹⁰⁶ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 69.

Es ist etwas scheinbar einfacheres, das uns aufgestört hat. Die Erinnerungslosigkeit. Erst Nachrichtensperre, dann bilderlose Sprachregelung der Nachrichten-Medien. Auf den Herbst '77 – Kappler, Schleyer, Mogadischu, die toten von Stammheim – folgte, wie jedes Jahr, Weihnachten '77 und Neujahr. Als wäre nichts geschehen. In diesem fahrenden D-Zug der Zeit ziehen wir die Notbremse. Für zwei Stunden Film versuchen wir, Erinnerung – eine subjektive Momentaufnahme – festzuhalten.¹⁰⁷

The *Nachrichtensperre*, or 'news blockade,' was instrumental in the state's attempt to consolidate public opinion on, and contain the threat posed by terrorism. As Varon rightly avers, 'by agreeing to a partial blackout of coverage, the press made public criticism of the government's handling of the crisis virtually impossible.'¹⁰⁸ The press was asked by the authorities 'nichts zu tun, was die Anstrengungen der Sicherheitsorgane des Bundes in irgendeiner Weise beeinträchtigen und dazu beitragen könnte, die Gefahrenlage zu verschärfen.'¹⁰⁹ But aside from pertaining to represent the national interest by seeking to avoid escalation, the authorities were, above all, determined not to let *their* media of mass communication be used as a 'Machtdemonstration' by the RAF, as had been the case during the Lorenz kidnapping at the hands of *Bewegung 2. Juni*.¹¹⁰ Such a strategy is aptly demonstrated in the September 8, 1977 edition of the news programme *Tagesschau*: a RAF video showing the imprisoned Schleyer and detailing the terrorists' demands in person cannot be shown, newsreader Wilhelm Wieben claims, due

¹⁰⁷ Alf BRUSTELLIN, Rainer Werner FASSBINDER, Alexander KLUGE, Volker SCHLÖNDORFF, Bernhard SINKEL, 'Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?', in Petra KRAUS, Natalie LETTENWITSCH, Ursula SAEKEL, Brigitte BRUNS, Matthias MERSCH, (eds.), *Deutschland im Herbst: Terrorismus im Film* (München: Schriftenreihe Münchner Filmzentrum, 1997), pp. 80-81 (80).

¹⁰⁸ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 286.

¹⁰⁹ Cited in Martin STEINSEIFER, 'Terrorismus als Medienereignis im Herbst 1977: Strategien, Dynamiken, Darstellungen, Deutung', in K. WEINHAEUER, J. REQUATE, H.-G. HAUPT (eds.) *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren* (Frankfurt & New York: Campus Verlag, 2006), pp. 351-381 (371). A direct source for this citation is not provided by the author.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

to a technical defect with the tape identified by the BKA.¹¹¹ Although the famous hostage-photograph of the dishevelled Schleyer as ‘Gefangener der RAF’ would eventually find its way in to the public domain (since becoming medially ubiquitous), at this early stage in the crisis the terrorists’ representation of the captured industrialist as a ‘negative icon of capitalist oppression’, to cite Varon, with direct associations to the fascist past is denied.¹¹² Instead, a file-photograph of a suited and smiling Schleyer in his state iteration of ‘positive’ icon of capitalist democracy accompanies the *Tagesschau* report. Ultimately, in the battle to define consensus on the meaning of the RAF’s terrorism, the group was denied both direct representational control and access to the public. As Hoerschelmann puts it, ‘neither the terrorists nor their supporters were given a platform on which to present their “propaganda.”’¹¹³ As such, for the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst*, the only news that reached their screens comprised ‘imageless verbal usages of the news media’ which presented a distorted, even disfigured memory of immediate events.

Referring to the transmission from communicative to cultural memory, Assmann notes that ‘was heute noch lebendige Erinnerung ist, wird morgen nur noch über Medien vermittelt sein.’¹¹⁴ Here, ‘tomorrow’ is taken by Assmann to be that, as yet, undefined point in the distant future when those with first-hand experience of an event begin to die out, but in the autumn of ’77 the shift from non-specialists to specialists in the transmission of the memory of recent events appeared, for all intent and purposes, to have occurred overnight. Next to the closed network of representation afforded by the

¹¹¹ The *Tagesschau* report from September 8 1977 is available to view in full on-line at *YouTube* < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTwdKwtwI7E>> [accessed on 23rd September 2007]

¹¹² VARON, p. 279.

¹¹³ HOERSCHELMANN, “Memoria Dexter Est”, p. 89.

¹¹⁴ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 51.

Nachrichtensperre, the wave of repression prompted by the sympathiser witch-hunt had sharpened to such an extent during the ‘German Autumn’ that people on the street were less willing to share their views for fear of recrimination. When the informal flow of communicative memories – characterized by their thematic instability and disorganization – should have been at their most pronounced with regard the RAF, they in fact gave way to the high degree of organization and regulation associated with the cultural phase of memory. In effect, cultural memory was being established before communicative memory had a chance to speak, and so, it would seem therefore, that the dominant memory of the immediate past, chiefly regulated by politicians and the media, was taking a premature leap into the phase of cultural memory. Assmann stresses the potential formative and normative power of cultural memory, which can act as ‘eine fundierende Geschichte’ for a social group. In spite of cultural memory’s reliance on props to keep it alive it is still based not on fact, but on remembered versions of these facts, as Assmann makes clear: ‘Für das kulturelle Gedächtnis zählt nicht faktische, sondern nur erinnerte Geschichte.’ Moreover, according to Assmann, it is through this selective process of remembering and forgetting that ‘im kulturellen Gedächtnis Geschichte in erinnerte und damit in Mythos transformiert wird’.¹¹⁵ Through the rapid instrumentalisation of the immediate past, which ghettoised first-hand memories of the recent past that did not favour the representational techniques of the state, a dominant cultural myth can be read as having been built around the RAF which emphasized an imagined German community, to draw on Benedict Arnold’s taxonomy, of complete

¹¹⁵ Jan ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p.35.

solidarity against the terrorist threat.¹¹⁶ This myth found its greatest expression in the reductive *Täter/Opfer* binary which, as we shall see in Chapter 4, successfully anchored itself in the collective consciousness and, some twenty five years after the event, showed little sign of abating. This ‘Polarisierung in kritiklose Akzeptanz oder absolute Ausgrenzung in einfachen “wir alle”/”sie”-Opposition’, as Steinseifer puts it, became fundamental to the state-perpetuated myth and the identity of the hegemonic group, that is the ‘wir alle’ of the Federal Republic and its supporters. Furthermore, as Varon suggests, ‘this negative construction of the RAF suggested a positive view of West Germany as part of the age-old project of civilised culture’, effectively burying the ruptures of the Nazi past which the terrorists had sought to illuminate.¹¹⁷

In the state’s formation of an official cultural memory surrounding the RAF, the ‘German Autumn’ was established as a ‘fixed point’, a collective experience, the symbols and events of which were used to shape this incident’s meaning for the group. As noted above, cultural memory carries the characteristic of ‘Fest’, that is, it is both established and maintained through rites and rituals, texts and monuments – through its ‘Zeremonialität’. Such facets were exemplified in the memorial service for Hanns-Martin Schleyer which, as Varon notes, ‘was elevated into an act of state, in which politicians extolled his sacrifice and reiterated their resolve to fight terrorism.’¹¹⁸ This occasion, was to become a moment of ritualistic significance in the preservation of the Federal Republic’s resolve to maintain its identity against the terrorist threat, saw Schleyer elevated to its chief symbol. Held in Stuttgart on October 25 1977, the televised *Staatsakt*

¹¹⁶ See Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

¹¹⁷ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 281.

¹¹⁸ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 278.

for Schleyer was attended by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and *Bundespräsident* Walter Scheel, with the latter using the event as an opportunity to consolidate the state view of the RAF. Less an occasion to celebrate Schleyer's life, Scheel's address was an opportunity to defend the murdered industrialist's status as an existential organ of the democratic state which the terrorists had attacked. Corresponding with Hoerschelmann's notion of a 'discursive struggle', the occasion of Scheel's address leads Varon to suggest that 'more than a eulogy, his speech was an important, highly public, and a sharply polemical moment in the *gesitige Auseinandersetzung* – the intellectual struggle – with terrorism'; an opportunity to foster loyalty to the state by 'convincing all Germans of the worth of their democracy and the need to defend it.'¹¹⁹ If, as Assmann avers, 'in der erinnernden Rückblickung an die Toten vergewissert sich eine Gemeinschaft ihrer Identität', then Schleyer's death at the hands of the Federal Republic's internal enemy was used as an opportunity to fortify collective cohesion and a group identity, predicated on the inclusivity of the 'wir-Gefühl'.¹²⁰

Instead of exploding the allegedly 'fascist' Bonn Republic, the terrorism of the RAF was used by its intended target to freeze the radical, revolutionary upheaval that the terrorists had hoped to bring about: as Theweleit has suggested elsewhere, the victory of the state's persecution of the RAF and its supporters, which coalesced around the fixity of the 'German Autumn', 'beging als eine Art neuen Bundesschwurs der "Zweiten Bonner Republik."' ¹²¹ Although 'new' in name, this so-called reformulation of the Bonn Republic was but a second coming of the same postwar socio-political and economic values which terrorist activity in the 70s had sought to overthrow, only now strengthened

¹¹⁹ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 279.

¹²⁰ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 63.

¹²¹ THEWELEIT, *Ghosts*, p. 72.

and seemingly vindicated by their success in weathering the RAF-storm and containing its challenge to hegemony.

As Assmann suggests, ‘nur *bedeutsame* Vergangenheit wird erinnert, nur *erinnerte* Vergangenheit wird bedeutsam.’¹²² For Aleida Assmann, ‘ebensogut könnte es heißen: Geschichte wird von den Siegern vergessen.’¹²³ If individual memories of an event are to anchor themselves in the collective imagination they must make the transition into public memory. By hastily shunting the memory of the RAF into the phase of cultural memory, the state sought regulate public memory by locking out those undesirable voices which might threaten its representational monopoly on the autumn of ’77 and the meaning of the RAF so that what *was* remembered would strengthen its own self image. The ‘Geformtheit’ of cultural memory as opposed to communicative memory poses the question of how members of the group outside of the elite cultural bearers who regulate its transmission can also participate. For Assmann: ‘die Antwort lautet: durch Zusammenkunft und persönliche Anwesenheit’, or ‘Dabeisein’.¹²⁴ The institutional communication of the televised *Staatsakt* for Schleyer allowed the masses to participate in its carefully constructed meaning, in which Schleyer was posited as a sacrificial figure representing *Nationalheiligtum*. As Varon maintains, ‘within the logic of sacrifice, Schleyer’s death nourished the democratic collective by strengthening the *Wertgebundenheit* at its core.’¹²⁵ Each and every one of the television audience to witness the memorial was reminded of this fact. In contrast, the disputed funeral for Schleyer’s indirect opponents – Baader, Ensslin and Raspe – was not televised.

¹²² ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 77.

¹²³ Aleida ASSMANN, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: Beck, 1998), p. 138.

¹²⁴ ASSMANN, p. 58

¹²⁵ VARON, p. 281.

In the case of *Deutschland im Herbst* then, it was a case of trying to chronicle that which was being left out of the official memory discourse, with the filmmakers emphasizing that they were trying to preserve memory in the form of a subjective momentary impression, which ran counter to the dominant discourse.¹²⁶ Through the apparatus of cultural memory the filmmakers embarked on the task of embedding a counter memory of the ‘German Autumn’ into the collective memory of the Federal Republic, which privileged first-hand experience deemed undesirable by the state and, it was hoped, would challenge official amnesia. Under the overall directorship of Alexander Kluge, contemporary filmmakers such as Edgar Reitz, Volker Schlöndorff and Rainer Werner Fassbinder intervened on this apparently closed discursive struggle over German history and national identity, attempting to contest official memory and reinitiate public debate over the role of the RAF and the ‘German Autumn’ as a ‘Geschichte der Verwirrung’, attempting to explore what the associations of ‘war’ and ‘1945’ meant for the autumn of 1977.¹²⁷

This impulse is continued in Margarethe von Trotta’s *Die bleierne Zeit*, a film which makes the ‘history of confusion’ explored in *Deutschland im Herbst* altogether more explicit. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the trauma of the repressed Nazi past is posited by von Trotta as the unequivocal motivational core for the radicalization of the postwar generation and its terrorism against the morally stained parent culture. However, *Die bleierne Zeit* is not just concerned with the repression of the Nazi past but also with contemporary repression surrounding the immediate memory of the RAF, or rather the lack thereof. Although based on the biographies of Gudrun and Christiane Ensslin, the

¹²⁶ See BRUSTELLIN, ET AL., ‘*Deutschland im Herbst*: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?’, p. 80.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

mode of fictionalization employed by von Trotta means that her text cannot be considered to count as communicative memory per se, such as the documentary sections of *Deutschland im Herbst*, but it nonetheless enacts the need to problematise and delineate official memory discourse through its emphasis on personal memory. Juliane's attempt to contest the official memory of her terrorist sister is of no interest to the press which is complicit in the creation of the Federal Republic's master narrative, so in her pursuit of alternative perspectives her only recourse is to the sphere of family commitment.

Both films attempt to rearticulate the structuring absences in West Germany's historical imagination, but not just in terms of the repressed Nazi past. For these filmmakers, not only had National Socialism *not* been dealt with, it had also set in motion a vicious circle of violence; the repressed shock of Nazism broke out in the terrorism of the RAF which as Kluge suggested was itself 'not suited to genuinely coming to terms with the previously repressed material.'¹²⁸ Seeking to assuage fears of a new cycle of contemporary repression, both films are invested in the importance of *Trauerarbeit*, and so the need to work through the terrorism of the RAF as trauma if the cycle of violence is to be broken. The instrumentalisation of the memory of the 'German Autumn' by the state may have succeeded in containing the threat posed by the terrorists to its power and legitimacy, but for the filmmakers of the New German Cinema it provided a false sense of catharsis, buried beneath which there were more questions to be asked. It is to an examination of these two key filmic texts which we now turn.

¹²⁸ Cited in KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p 25.

Chapter 2

‘Erinnerungslosigkeit’ and ‘Gegeninformation’ in *Deutschland im Herbst* (1978)

In the previous chapter, I examined the historical and social conditions in West Germany after WWII which informed the world view of the 68er protest movement and the subsequent terrorism of the RAF, even if their methods differed. These conditions provided the context for the state’s response to the terrorist threat and its flash-point in the autumn of ’77. The federal government’s handling of the terrorist crisis exposed a ruthlessness in its determination to silence the terrorists whose violent acts sought to challenge its hegemony and, most vitally, a collective identity rooted in the democratic process which the terrorists claimed was inherently autocratic. As we have seen, this resolve on the part of the state to preserve its identity also saw its anti-terror measures extended to the ‘indirect’ danger posed, as the authorities saw it, by the RAF’s sympathisers. Although the state might be read as having damaged its own claim to democratic legitimacy through the deployment of a punitive, militant brand of democracy in its war of nerves against the terrorists, it undoubtedly emerged as the victor of the so-called ‘German Autumn’ and its wider conflict with the first generation of the RAF. Using Jan Assmann’s work on memory discourse as a methodological optic, I examined the way in which the state, in a bid to contain, or quarantine the terrorist ‘infection’ sought to lock ‘communicative memories’ of the RAF which did not favour its representational view out of the public discourse on the immediate past. In so doing, the state might be said to have prematurely propelled the immediate memory of the ‘German Autumn’ into the phase of ‘cultural memory.’ Indeed, the state’s attempt to stabilize

communicated meaning of the immediate past from above closely adheres to the terms laid out by Assmann's approach. Acts of state, such as the memorial service for the murdered industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer, served as ritualistic 'fixed points' which drew on the immediate past in the attempt to build a coherent narrative intended to buttress the collective identity of the Federal Republic against the RAF. Aided by its cultural bearers the state ultimately emerged victorious in its discursive struggle with the terrorists, thus effectively granting the federal government the 'final' say on the matter.

Regarded as key cultural commentators, the filmmakers of the New German Cinema, many of whom emerged from the same generational backdrop as the students and the terrorists, were spurred in to action by precisely this state of affairs, namely the apparent monopoly held by the hegemonic order, and furnished by the state media, over the images and viewpoints which came to characterize its handling of the crisis: as the filmmakers Bernd Sinkel and Alf Brustellin commented, 'Nach dem "Ereignissen" im Herbst 77 haben wir gesehen, in welchem Maße Zensur und Selbst-zensur in den Medien eingezogen ist.'¹ Released in 1978 following an express production cycle, but revisiting the *Staatsakt* for Schleyer as well as chronicling the disputed burial of Baader, Ensslin and Raspe, the collective omnibus film *Deutschland im Herbst/Germany in Autumn* (1977/78) intervened on the apparently closed discursive struggle over collective identity and German history, seeking, above all, to contest the veil of contemporary amnesia which the filmmakers felt had settled over the RAF with alarming alacrity. A pocket of resistance in a minefield of conservative and reactionary media coverage, *Deutschland im Herbst* seeks to contest and, in so doing, delineate official public memory in an effort to reinitiate public debate over the role of the RAF and the 'German Autumn' as, in the

¹ Christel BUSCHMANN, 'Deutschland im Herbst', *Konkret*, 2, 26th January 1978.

filmmakers' words, 'eine Geschichte der Verwirrung.'² Although much has been written on the film there are still new perspectives that can be yielded by closely considering the rapid instrumentalisation and turn to cultural memory discussed previously.³ This chapter will therefore consider the strategies deployed by the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* in their bid to hold on to memory, and to which we now turn.

Preserving the 'German Autumn': the genesis of *Deutschland im Herbst*, and the communicative memory of the RAF

The status of collective memory surrounding the RAF was highlighted by the left-wing journal *Konkret* (where Ulrike Meinhof had served as editor before her radicalization and fatal descent into the terrorist underground) which, in a report on the production of *Deutschland im Herbst* in January of 1978, begins with the sardonic comment: 'Es gab Deutschland im Herbst (für die, die es schon vergessen haben, Schleyer, Mogadischu, Stammheim).'⁴ Certainly, the specialized practices of institutionalized memory stabilization and regulation which accompanied the 'German Autumn' carried an air of finality with them, but for the filmmakers of the New German Cinema, while the topic RAF has been successfully managed by the state, this did not mean that it had been overcome, or 'bewältigt'. The sense of catharsis promoted by the state through Schleyer's 'sacrifice' for the health of the collective as well as the end to the terrorists' leading cadre was, for these filmmakers at least, false; there was clearly more to be said on the topic which ran counter to dominant opinion. But as Miriam Hansen noted in her seminal 1981

² BRUSTELLIN, et al., 'Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?', p. 81.

³ See, for example, Miriam HANSEN, 'Cooperative Auteur Cinema and oppositional Public Sphere: Alexander Kluge's contribution to *Germany in Autumn*', *New German Critique*, 24-25 (1981-82), pp. 36-56; KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat*, pp. 22-28; WENZEL, *Gedächtnisraum Film*, pp. 243-63; Nora M. ALTER, *Projecting History, German Nonfiction Cinema, 1967-2000* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 43-75.

⁴ Christel BUSCHMANN, 'Deutschland im Herbst'.

essay on the text, for a national cinema industry largely dependent on a system of state subsidies, ‘how could a film set out to subvert the government’s politics of information and at the same time ask for public funding?’⁵ The articulation of oppositional voices and the creation of counter memories needed financial support, but in a climate of repression and increased censorship measures the film’s fiscal thrust would have to come from elsewhere. Although Volker Schlöndorff (aided by his then wife Margarethe von Trotta) and Alexander Kluge had already decided to document the funerals for both Schleyer and the Stammheim dead on 35mm film, the impetus for a feature length film dealing with the political crisis of the ‘German Autumn’ came from the *Filmverlag der Autoren* which, bankrolled by the editor of *Spiegel* – Rudolf Augstein, had been set up in 1971 by a cooperative of filmmakers to, in Hansen’s words, ‘produce and distribute their work independently of the commercial machinery.’⁶

Originally intended to include a contribution from Werner Herzog,⁷ the film project that became *Deutschland im Herbst* would include fictional vignettes from Volker Schlöndorff (and scripted by Heinrich Böll) in which a television committee shelves a TV-play of Sophocles’ *Antigone* due to its undesirable topicality; Rainer Werner Fassbinder who seemingly bares all for the camera, charting his personal disintegration as an alleged high-profile RAF-sympathiser; Edgar Reitz who stages the paranoia and distrust of the period in a confrontation between an innocent couple and a somewhat belligerent, armed border policeman; Hans Peter Cloos and Katja Rupé, whose critically

⁵ HANSEN, ‘Alexander Kluge’s contribution to *Germany in Autumn*’, p. 45.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Herzog’s failed contribution would have depicted various people talking about, and singing the German national anthem, which recurs throughout the finished film as a leitmotif. Although the director had intended to provide a substitute episode, this did not come to fruition. See BUSCHMANN, ‘Deutschland im Herbst’.

beleaguered segment similarly deals with the subconscious cachet of distrust generated by the tense politicized atmosphere, and Bernd Sinkel and Alf Brustellin whose varied contributions intended to highlight 'die Verwirrung der Gefühle', felt by both those committed, or at least very close to the leftist political tradition and the wider public in the wake of left-wing terrorism.⁸ Above all, together these fictional contributions aim for 'die Wiedergabe von Atmosphäre' of the period, something which Reitz suggests was 'das ehrlichste oder Anständigste, was man machen kann' as a filmmaker at the time.⁹ The Sinkel/Brustellin contribution introduces the character of Franziska Bush. A fictional creation, Bush nonetheless transcends the confines of her fictitious status, acting as a bridge between the attempt to reproduce the atmosphere of the 'German Autumn' and the original contributions and documentary realism also proffered by her male creators: Sinkel and Brustellin's brief sketch on domestic violence is interwoven with songs by the dissident East German poet and songwriter Wolf Biermann and followed by an extensive interview with Horst Mahler, credited as the co-founder of the RAF, the screening of which Bush attends.

The fictional vignettes are held together by the montage framework provided by Alexander Kluge who, also acting as supervising editor to Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus's overall cut, is the chief creative force behind the film's finished form.¹⁰ Framed by two funerals, *Deutschland im Herbst* opens with the documentary footage of the *Staatsakt* for Schleyer, and closes with the burial for Baader, Ensslin and Raspe. This footage works in conjunction with a series of further sequences by Kluge which explore the historical

⁸ In BUSCHMANN, 'Deutschland im Herbst', p. 36.

⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁰ Thomas Elsaesser for one maintains that, 'Germany in Autumn', in its overall structure [...] bears the unmistakable stamp of Kluge.'; ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema: A History* (Basingstoke & London: bfi, 1989), p. 260.

identity of Germany and introduce a further fictional character, that of Gabi Teichert, the history teacher who later returns in Kluge's solo analysis of Germany's historical imagination, *Die Patriotin* (1978).

Above all, *Deutschland im Herbst* is invested in the task of embedding a counter memory of the 'German Autumn' in to the collective memory of the Federal Republic. Through the apparatus of cultural memory, a film, the collective behind *Deutschland im Herbst* attempts to articulate dissenting voices and communicative memories, including their own, that were considered taboo during the repressive media blackout. With the exception of Nora M. Alter, scholars have all but ignored a key working example of communicative memory captured by the film, namely the interview with imprisoned RAF member Horst Mahler.¹¹ Mahler is introduced in a brief voice-over as the figure widely regarded as the spiritual founder of the RAF, before being allowed to speak for himself without direct interference from the filmmakers. Some brief notes on Mahler's biography will be useful here.

In Chapter 1 we were introduced to Mahler as the lawyer who defended Baader during the Frankfurt arson trial in 1968. Mahler's defense of Baader was unsuccessful, resulting in a prison sentence for his client and precipitating a chain of events leading to the RAF's inception in 1970. Before his jail break, Baader, along with Ensslin, had absconded to Italy when, after a brief stay of their sentence, their appeal for clemency was turned down. Mahler's reputation as the spiritual founder of the RAF arose because, during Baader and Ensslin's absence, he formed his own militant group along revolutionary lines in West Berlin. Travelling under the innocuous guise of a German

¹¹ Alter briefly considers the interview with Mahler. See ALTER, *Projecting History*, p. 61. Hansen flags the inclusion of the interview but does not discuss it; HANSEN, 'Alexander Kluge's Contribution to *Germany in Autumn*', p. 46.

tourist, Mahler brought Baader and Ensslin back to West Berlin to join his nascent organization. But Mahler's leadership was contested from the outset; Baader would argue that whereas he had put his ideas into practice, Mahler continued to hide behind his bourgeois identity as a legal practitioner and so lacked the radical energies to lead the 'revolution'. Mahler travelled with the group to Jordan after the freeing of Baader but was quickly arrested by the authorities upon his own return to West Germany in 1971. The beginnings of unilateral split on the part of Baader et al occurred after Mahler released a paper from his cell in Moabit prison outlining the RAF's position. In a display of vitriol, Ensslin refuted his paper, maintaining 'Das hat mit uns überhaupt nichts zu tun. Das ist ein Konzept von Guerilla, aufgeblasen wie Indianerspielen.'¹² Following the capture of his comrades, Mahler neither took part in the hunger strikes which he deemed an 'Ohnmachtsstrategie',¹³ nor did he consent to being traded when, after the successful kidnapping of Lorenz, the *Bewegung 2. Juni* included Mahler's name on the list of those to be freed in exchange for the life of Lorenz. For Aust, by 1974 it was clear that Mahler had been sidelined by the rest of the group, dismissed as 'eine lächerliche Figur' for his perceived unwillingness to put theory into practice.¹⁴

Discussions of *Deutschland im Herbst* stress its importance as an alternative voice on the events of the 'German Autumn'. Therefore, it is strange that they also seem to systematically ignore the exclusive interview with Horst Mahler – the ostensible *Ur-Täter* of the RAF from a state-media perspective – conducted from his prison cell in Moabit. Initially at least, the inclusion of Mahler might be read as a strategic coup on the part of the filmmakers. As the above-mentioned tensions within the RAF suggest, Mahler

¹² AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 177.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹⁴ AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, p. 297.

represents a more reasoned and less fanatical voice of contemporary terror which immediately runs contrary to the state depiction of morally and ethically deplorable zealots. Mahler genially invites the camera into his small cell. He is kempt and affable and while he is being fitted with a microphone the camera is free to explore the small space, choosing to linger on the many shelves which are lined with theoretical texts and suggest an intellectual rigour which is reinforced by Mahler's articulate manner.

Mahler proposes a brief intellectual assessment of the RAF, exploring what he views as three key dates in the development of the Federal Republic - 1945, 1967 and 1977. It is interesting that Mahler locates 1967, the year in which Benno Ohnesorg was killed by the police, as an 'auslösendes Moment' in the history of the protest era that compelled the postwar children attempted to make up for the lack of an anti-fascist revolution in '45. Foremost, Mahler's historical demarcation echoes the recent paradigm shift foregrounded in the previous chapter, whereby the increasingly beleaguered consensual understanding of 1968 as a cultural and political cut-off point in the development of postwar German society has been revised by commentators such as Gerd Koenen in terms of a 'red decade' which instead locates 1967 as a point of radicalization that is linked to the terrorism of the 'German Autumn.'

In Mahler's view, the 68ers ultimately failed in their attempted revolution of society because they lacked solidarity. He exonerates their approach while diagnosing the reasons for its failure, namely that their revolutionary consciousness was not sufficiently well enough developed to see its aims through. The collective behind *Deutschland im Herbst* affords Mahler a filmic space to put his views across but, given room to breathe, the assumed propagandistic frenzy of this 'murderous fanatic' gives way to a far more

measured response which even demonstrates a capacity for self-criticism. Indeed, for Mahler the terrorists (and here he includes himself) were detached from the social conditions of the Federal Republic and so the readiness of the masses for social and political upheaval. However, this self-acknowledged element of *Realitätsverlust* does not include his generation's assessment of the Federal Republic as a social anomie congruous with Nazi Germany. Rather, for the imprisoned terrorist, it points to their failure to recognize that the bedrock of revolutionary change was lacking and that the wider public, which it was assumed would be spurred into action by the RAF's militant example, was not in fact prepared to wage war or lend them the wide-scale support they needed. He even goes as far as to postulate that, had they realized this, it might not have led to political action. Of course, Mahler might well be tailoring his memory of the past to suit his present situation, constructing an identity for himself as a deliberate thinker which might set him apart from his erstwhile comrades, particularly the fervent Baader/Ensslin combination whose abstract paroles, such as 'unbedingter Kampf' and 'Nie-Nachgeben, Durchhalten', appeared to have replaced any attempt at measured analysis by the time of their deaths, and which for many had never been there to begin with.

Without doubt, the interview reveals the undeniable tensions that existed between Mahler and the RAF's first-generation cadre, and betrays a possible agenda. His analysis, fraught with ambivalence and ambiguities, might be read as exposing an axe to grind with Baader, Ensslin and their second generation disciples. Drawing on the events of the autumn of '77, Mahler hints at a loss of political legitimacy embodied by the hijacking of a Lufthansa passenger-airliner, the 'Landshut', suggesting that what began as the fight

against capitalist imperialism ended with the RAF attempting to rescue prisoners that the population did not identify with by threatening defenceless women and children rather than 'legitimate' political targets. In doing so, Mahler distances himself from the moral bankruptcy of the RAF's increasingly desperate logic of exchange during the twilight hours of the 'German Autumn'. Frequently eloquent, and yet fraught with contradictions, Mahler's homily on the revolutionary struggle nonetheless sees him defend the RAF's notion of 'Opferwillen', or the readiness to sacrifice others, in relation to Ulrike Meinhof, an erstwhile ideologue of the group who also found herself increasingly marginalized and maligned by the dominant pairing of Baader and Ensslin. Responding to his own question of how a kindred spirit like Meinhof could have reached a point of radicalization in which she thought it permissible to take a life in the name of her beliefs, Mahler 'answers' in a somewhat diffuse riposte by assessing the difference between a criminal and a revolutionary. The former, he suggests, departs from the code of moral values whereas the revolutionary transcends this system. Quietly critical, Mahler seems to venerate the revolutionary project and its favoured proponents while castigating those who rejected him for the arrogant presumptuousness of their methods. But although Mahler might suggest a critical view of the RAF's later claims to political and moral legitimacy he stands firm in his diagnosis of the Federal Republic as a state still rooted in the social causes of fascism.

Aside from introducing Mahler, the interview is not subject to a voice-over by the filmmakers. The way in which the piece is incorporated into the overall structure does, however, expose a filmic strategy. The interview with Mahler is presented both as 'live' and as a film within a film. Beginning as 'live' footage, a cut reveals the interview being

watched by Biermann and Sinkel in a screening room, which is otherwise empty. The fictional figure Franziska Busch enters the room while the familiar voice of Kluge tells us that Busch, having read Mahler's publications, has come to see the interview in the hope of hearing 'eine Erklärung'. It later transpires that the fictional Bush is herself involved with a left-wing filmmaking collective which is trying to reproduce the form of revolutionary films of the 1920s.¹⁵ As such, the answers Busch hopes will be forthcoming from Mahler can be read as intended to shed clarity on the aforementioned 'Verwirrung der Gefühle' that she feels, and which the terrorists' programme of left-wing 'revolutionary' violence prompted in a wider community committed to a leftist political tradition in Germany.¹⁶ An expression of her eagerness, she sits in the front row of the screening room, but the lucidity she hopes to garner from an ostensible 'Ur-Täter' on the meaning of politically destabilizing urban terror is not forthcoming. Reacting to Mahler's interview with frustration, she motions to Biermann and Sinkel, but is hushed by the latter who does not claim to have any satisfactory answers either.

The filmmakers' reluctance to add comment or clarify the 'truths' behind Mahler's verbal treatise might frustrate Bush, but it stands at odds with the representational strategies of the state media, which was quick to instrumentalise images surrounding the 'German Autumn' in support of the moral and intellectual comfort of the hegemonic regime. The filmmaker's refusal to stabilize or even rationalize the meaning of Mahler's account for Busch exposes their reluctance to risk instrumentalising first-hand biographies. Whereas the media depiction of the 'German Autumn' sought to offer a final assessment of the terrorism of the RAF and so a claim to the 'truth' behind its

¹⁵ See ALTER, *Projecting History*, p. 61.

¹⁶ See BUSCHMANN, 'Deutschland im Herbst'.

meaning for the collective, the scene with Mahler emphasizes discord and ambiguity. It is presented as but one perspective, not *the* perspective. That the communicative memories of Mahler might be read as a heterogeneous jumble rather than a homogeneous accord are welcomed by the collective behind the film. Indeed, in their mission statement the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* stressed that ‘Herbst 1977 ist die Geschichte der Verwirrung. Genau die gilt es festzuhalten. Wer die Wahrheit weiß, lügt. Wer sie nicht weiß, sucht.’¹⁷ We presume that Busch leaves the screening room disappointed. Her hopes for clarity, let alone the ‘truth’, are not satisfied, neither by Mahler, nor the filmmakers.¹⁸ Echoing Bush’s position, throughout this chapter we will see that the spectator finds him/herself in a similar position.

The ambivalence surrounding the ‘German Autumn’ is further reflected in the hybrid form of *Deutschland im Herbst*. Before we go on to consider Kluge’s substantial contribution to the film, we first need to consider perhaps the most (in)famous and enduring contribution to the film by the New German Cinema’s *enfant terrible*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder. With the exception of Kluge’s disembodied voice (to which we will return) and the brief glimpse of Sinkel, the filmmakers are largely absent from *Deutschland im Herbst*. This lends Fassbinder’s decision to play himself all the more impact. The camera locates Fassbinder in hiding in his Munich apartment due to his putative status as a high profile ‘RAF-sympathiser,’ a tag applied to the filmmaker who, even though he identified with the Left’s causes, was distrustful of left-wing political activism in all of its forms – whether terroristic or otherwise. Nonetheless, making films

¹⁷ BRUSTELLIN, ET AL, ‘*Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?*’, p. 80.

¹⁸ A testament to the unwavering air of confusion that surrounds the legacy of the RAF, and not without a sense of historical irony. Mahler has since radically changed his position, switching from the extreme left to the extreme right and acting as a spokes person for the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*/National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD).

on a sensitive topic in a polarized society would lead Fassbinder to comment that 'Ich werfe keine Bomben, ich mache Filme', a declaration that was attached to the publicity material for his subsequent film on 1970s West German urban terrorism, *Die dritte Generation* (1979).¹⁹ Filmed in the weeks immediately following the political crisis of autumn '77, Fassbinder's contribution to *Deutschland im Herbst* depicts his own mental disintegration as a provocative cultural commentator attempting to operate in a climate of media censorship, the increasing need for self-censorship and political repression. Established opinion has considered the degree of 'truth' behind Fassbinder's apparent self-portrayal. As Alter rightly points out, the segment is 'clearly coded as a documentary', lending Fassbinder's 'naked' performance an air of authenticity, even if largely false.²⁰ For Eric Rentschler, the director who emerges on the screen is a 'problematized subject', a version of Fassbinder which emerges in the segment's 'singular merger of documentary confession and fictional self-stylization',²¹ and as Elsaesser comments in his study of the New German Cinema, the episode is 'artlessly casual but carefully scripted',²² leading him to ponder elsewhere 'but who is the "he" that bears the physical features of Rainer Werner Fassbinder?'²³ Thus for Alter, the Fassbinder episode might be viewed 'as no more real than the more obviously fictional parts of the film', but as we shall see, this does not diminish its power as an alternative communicative memory of the period, the likes of which would not have been seen on

¹⁹ Cited in Walter ULKA, 'Terrorismus im Film der 70er Jahre: Über die Schwierigkeiten deutscher Filmemacher beim Umgang mit der realen Gewalt', in K. WEINHAEUER, J. REQUATE, H.-G. HAUPT (eds.), *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren* (Frankfurt & New York: Campus Verlag, 2007), pp. 382-398 (390).

²⁰ ALTER, *Projecting History*, p. 63.

²¹ Eric RENTSCHLER, *West German Film in the Course of Time: Reflections on the Twenty Years since Oberhausen* (New York: Redgrave, 1984), p. 192.

²² Thomas ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema: A History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 267.

²³ Thomas ELSAESSER, *Fassbinder's Germany: History, Identity, Subject* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), p. 70.

state television. By considering the segment in terms of the projection of memory we can yield further insights into the contribution.

Fassbinder's contribution is tense and fraught, with the choice of *mise-en-scène* intensifying the director's sense of paranoia and mental distress. The apartment is suitably claustrophobic; shot at very tight angles in confined spaces and dimly-lit throughout, a sense of anguish suffocates the setting as a tormented Fassbinder stalks the confined space unable to settle or find solitude in the presence of his partner Armin Meier. Every sound arouses suspicion: when he hears the shrill din of sirens, and the sound of the police rushing along the corridor of his apartment-floor, he is convinced they have come for him and suffers what appears to be a panic attack. The camera struggles to follow him into his tiny and cramped toilet. The more agitated Fassbinder becomes, so too do the physical spaces he occupies become increasingly restrictive. Analogous with the increasing constriction of mental freedom that Fassbinder feels, he hunches over the toilet and is violently sick. Fassbinder exposes himself, or, as we have considered, a version of himself, for the camera both as metaphor and literally. As he receives the news of the alleged suicides of Baader, Ensslin and Raspe over the telephone – which has become his self-enforced, sole means of communicating with the outside world – he is seemingly at his most vulnerable: stripped of his trademark leather jacket, the signifier of his public persona as director, and indeed any other clothing, he sits naked on the floor, mindlessly kneading his penis as he tries to take in the news.

These scenes are intercut with the famous interview with Fassbinder's mother in which mother and son 'discuss' the state's restrictions on freedom of expression. Alter's observation that the mother 'condemns Heinrich Böll for his statements in support of

Meinhof' is mistaken.²⁴ She in fact claims to have defended Böll's freedom of speech to a friend who instantly labeled *her* a 'Sympathisant'. Fassbinder's castigation of his mother focuses on her willingness to withdraw from the democratic process as a result of her experience: telling her son that the present climate reminds her of Nazi Germany, Fassbinder's mother declares that the Federal Republic is no longer a democracy but, in a spirit of self-preservation, recommends that no one criticize the social hegemony. Her withdrawal echoes the social malaise that aided the Nazis in collapsing the brittle Weimar democracy, thus prompting Fassbinder to attack her cowardice. In what has become a seminal exchange he goes on to bulldoze their conversation, hounding her until she betrays what Elsaesser suggests 'one might call "ordinary authoritarianism" or "everyday fascism"', in response to the breakdown of authority's symbolic function.²⁵ Indeed, her solution to the political crisis unleashed by terrorism is 'Vernunft von oben', specifically the return of 'ein autoritärer Herrscher, der ganz gut ist und ganz lieb und ordentlich.' But as Anton Kaes points out, 'Fassbinder condemns his mother for her authoritarian beliefs and her cowardice, while – and this is the dialectic behind his contribution – the camera captures the very same qualities in himself.'²⁶ Besides deploying oppressive measures he claims to abhor – in effect interrogating his mother to achieve the desired 'confession' – Fassbinder is brutal towards his lover Armin, whom he beats for suggesting that the 'Landshut' air-jackers should be lined up and shot. Unwilling to accommodate criticism himself, Fassbinder throws Armin out of their apartment which, in the heat of the argument, he aggressively defends as his own territory. While described by Kaes as

²⁴ ALTER, *Projecting History*, p. 62.

²⁵ ELSAESSER, *Fassbinder's Germany*, p. 70.

²⁶ KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p. 80.

bordering on the sadistic,²⁷ from the perspective of Elsaesser, Fassbinder's conduct is less a mirroring of the punitive authoritarian traits he exposes in his family circle than the enactment of 'paranoia's narcissistic/exhibitionist obverse', ignited in the filmmaker by the pressures of the political crisis, whereby 'the ambivalence of self-loathing and self-love are projected aggressively on the mother and the lover in turn.' The pressures of state and media repression on this left-leaning cultural commentator become a simultaneous 'occasion for self-display' and near complete withdrawal.²⁸

This ambiguity of position, specifically the turn to violence, prompted in Fassbinder can be posited as a further expression of the 'Verwirrung der Gefühle' mentioned above which, unleashed by the destabilizing potential of terrorist violence and the threat of state censure, here spills over into the domestic sphere and manifests itself in equally confused violent outbursts. Indeed, Fassbinder's cruel physical treatment of his lover is not the only example of non-terrorist violence in the film. In the brief Sinkel and Brustellin's scene immediately preceding Mahler's screen-entry, Franziska Bush is to be seen helping a victim of domestic violence to the sound of Biermann's elegiac, extradiegetic composition – *Was wird bloß aus unseren Träumen?* In her attempt to gain clarity from Mahler on the implications of terrorist violence for the trajectory of the Left and its utopian dreams of a better tomorrow, we might even postulate that Biermann's song lends itself as a direct question to which Bush had hoped, albeit in vain, to gain a tangible answer. What links the Sinkel/Brustellin and Fassbinder contributions is that, from a leftist perspective, they explore a nexus of historical and contemporary manifestations of violence that are prevalent in society. When Armin returns from his

²⁷ See *ibid.*

²⁸ ELSAESSER, *Fassbinder's Germany*, p. 70.

violent eviction with a Hamburg tourist in tow who needs a place to stay, Fassbinder's mental collapse under the pressures of the crisis reach their zenith. In an overdetermined response, Fassbinder, clearly fearful that the stranger is a terrorist, hides from view while Armin is forced to throw the man out. But Fassbinder's early aggression toward his lover now turns in to an aggressive need for his affirmative gaze. Covered by a dressing-gown, and so now negating the opportunity for self-display and physical excess he had previously embraced, a sobbing Fassbinder collapses on the floor in a moment that implies, or at least suggests, as Alter comments, 'that he has capitulated to antiterrorist hysteria promoted by the state, that in his mind he has become a fascist.'²⁹

Fassbinder's contribution is a subjective rendering of the pressure felt by left-leaning intellectuals and social commentators during 1977, at a time when the wave of political repression and escalation meant that the slim conceptual divide between 'sympathiser' and 'terrorist' had narrowed to the point of near erosion for cultural elites and anonymous members of the public alike. Whereas the interview with Mahler stands as, on the part of the filmmakers, a predominantly unmediated communicative memory embedded in the apparatus of cultural formation, Fassbinder is both within the film and of the film, that is, in a self-reflexive gesture, he appears as 'himself' but also directs that version of himself in a carefully mediated enactment of self-image. He is both first-hand witness and cultural bearer. But this guarded oscillation between fact and fiction does not diminish the communicative strengths of Fassbinder's 'performance' of individual memory, particularly if one considers that individual memories are always socially mediated, in so far as they are composed in relation to the self-image of the addressee which might take the form of other individuals, or groups ranging from families, to

²⁹ ALTER, *Projecting History*, p. 62.

political-groupings to the spectatorship of a cinema. In short, memory constructed at the level of the individual is, in itself, a performance tailored to suit present concerns. Indeed, we have already considered the ways in which Mahler's entry, positioned but otherwise untouched by the filmmakers, exposes a possible agenda in relation to the imprisoned terrorist's present situation. As such, can we say that Mahler's memories are any less mediated than those of Fassbinder? In both cases, what Aleida Assmann terms 'das individuelle Gedächtnis' remains as 'das dynamische Medium subjektiver Erfahrungsverarbeitung.'³⁰

Fassbinder's former editor and now director of the Fassbinder Foundation, Juliane Lorenz, claims that what has been viewed as the 'carefully scripted interview with his mother',³¹ to cite but Elsaesser, is less artificial than one might think, averring that the filmed interview was a re-staging of an earlier, spontaneous conversation. According to Lorenz, Fassbinder subsequently asked his mother if she would be prepared to have those views captured on camera, resulting in the final piece.³² Scripted, stylized or otherwise, the overall contribution may bear the marks of cultural formation but it nonetheless provides Fassbinder, another of the state's feared dissident voices, a forum in which to render memories pertaining to his personal biographical experience, memories which would otherwise have been denied a platform. As von Trotta put it in interview: 'he described an atmosphere which concerned us all and the fear that throttled us in 1977, the year of the witch hunt against the leftist sympathisers – it was not so much a documentary

³⁰ ASSMANN, Aleida, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (München: Beck, 2006), p. 25.

³¹ ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema*, p. 267.

³² Interview with Juliane Lorenz, Art Haus DVD release of *Deutschland im Herbst* (2004).

as a documentation of his own fear.’³³ The episode serves one of the main objectives of the overall film, namely to explore from an alternative perspective the destabilizing mood that engulfed West German society but which, by the time of the film’s release, appeared to have been forgotten. Fassbinder’s methods speak to his overall project as a critical filmmaker whereby, as Elsaesser has suggested, ‘it was not a matter of making films that ‘exposed’ the illiberal state or ‘condemned’ the RAF [...], but to put in the picture the inner workings of anguish, paranoia and the unbearable tension that result.’³⁴ Less invested in trying to solidify memory of the ‘German Autumn’, which characterized the state’s production of cultural memory, Fassbinder’s exposé seeks to maintain openness and ambivalence, and so precisely the ‘Geschichte der Verwirrung’ which the collective behind *Deutschland im Herbst* felt needed to be held on to.

Framing the ‘German Autumn’: *Trauerarbeit* and Alexander Kluge’s contribution

Thus far we have considered the filmmakers’ bid to present ‘Gegeninformation’ (alternative information) in the form of communicative memories, the likes of which had been exorcised from the production of a state regulated cultural memory or master narrative surrounding the terrorism of the ‘German Autumn.’ But, in addition, *Deutschland im Herbst*’s investment in the creation of counter memories necessitates the exploration of counter historical readings which also run contrary to dominant discourse, thus challenging the ‘structuring absences’³⁵ in Germany’s historical imagination which had been deployed by the authorities to refute the RAF’s claim of continuities between

³³ Margarethe VON TROTTA, ‘A Sure Instinct’ in Juliane LORENZ (ed.), *Chaos as Usual: Conversations about Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (New York & London: Applause, 1997), pp. 125-29 (129).

³⁴ ELSAESSER, *Fassbinder’s Germany*, p. 38.

³⁵ For more on Hoerschelmann’s taxonomy see his, ‘Film and Public Memory in Postwar Germany’, and the previous chapter also.

the Federal Republic and its fascist antecedent, and so suggestions that urban terrorism was a misguided, violent reaction to the abhorrence of the Nazi past its unresolved trauma. In trying to reanimate public discussion on an apparently closed topic, the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* stress the need to come to terms with the terrorism of the RAF not just as a self-contained aberrant crisis, but an aftershock on a temporal axis of violence which reaches further back than the autumn of '77.

As Alexander Kluge made clear shortly after the crisis, 'the repressed shock [of the Nazi past, CH] breaks out in terrorism, a point that is actually not suited to genuinely coming to terms with the previously repressed material; it may even produce new distortions.'³⁶ Furthermore then, for the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* the expediency with which the state contained and regulated the memory of the RAF to suit its own purposes was a dangerous tactic. If the postwar generation's anger over the largely repressed trauma of National Socialist violence, the discussion of which urban terrorism sought to reanimate, had indeed played a role in instigating the ill-fated, intended antidote of contemporary terror, there was a clear danger for the filmmakers that the rapid repression of the memory of the RAF which appeared to be taking place might lead to 'new distortions'; not least the possibility of future cycles of violence if the wounds of history, both immediate and less recent, were not properly healed. Given our discussion above, domestic violence might be posited as a precipitant 'distortion', incited by the destabilizing relationship of terrorism and contemporary waves of repression – notably restricted freedom of speech. As such, in its construction of a counter memory of the 'German Autumn', *Deutschland im Herbst* is heavily invested in the work of mourning or *Trauerarbeit* – which itself involves a process of *Aufarbeitung der*

³⁶ Cited in KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p. 25.

Vergangenheit – not just in relation to the contemporary trauma of the RAF, but a nexus of historically motivated cycles of violence. Central to this process are the montage sequences of Kluge, to which we now turn.

The film is framed by two public acts of mourning held in Stuttgart, but of very different character; namely the memorial service, elevated into a *Staatsakt*, for Schleyer which opens the film, and the inflammatory burial for Baader, Ensslin and Raspe, which closes the film. Although the treatment of the respective funerals reveals the filmmakers' political bias, they nonetheless stress the need for open communication and collective mourning, and not the collective amnesia promoted by tightly regulated cultural formation. Indeed, for Timothy Corrigan, *Deutschland im Herbst* 'makes its story a formal and political argument against closure.'³⁷ The memorial service for Schleyer forms the prologue to the rest of the film. At a first glance, the presentation of the funeral does little to distinguish itself from the images that permeated the West German media. However, as Wenzel notes, it quickly becomes apparent that 'im Unterschied zur Fernsehdokumentation ist in diesem Prolog jedoch auffällig, daß das Voice-Over sozusagen ausfällt: Kein Kommentar, der die Bilder auf seine Gegenwart suggerierende Funktion festschreibt'.³⁸ Instead of a direct commentary on the events depicted or their relationship to the state's war of nerves against the RAF, we hear Kluge reading out a letter from Schleyer to his son, written during his imprisonment in the RAF's self-proclaimed *Volksgefängnis*. The disengagement of the expected audio-commentary from the visual aspect of the film draws the spectator's attention to different points in time; the Kluge-narrated audio track of Schleyer's letter clashes with the immediate present.

³⁷ Timothy CORRIGAN, *New German Film: The Displaced Image* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1983), p. 17.

³⁸ WENZEL, *Gedächtnisraum Film*, p. 247.

namely the visual fact of Schleyer's death. As such, the disassociation of sound and vision do not allow the expected filmic identity to form because one aspect of the filmic medium draws attention to its relationship with the other, forcing the spectator to re-examine exactly what is on show. With sharp immediacy *Deutschland im Herbst* challenges the spectator to refocus his/her perspective and begin (re-)working through material which the state media had proffered as a closed network of information.

A third voice is 'heard' at the end of the prologue in the form of a non-diegetic insert from Frau Wilde, a fictional creation of Kluge whose back-story claims that she was found buried in the rubble in 1945 and later analysed by a psychologist trying to find out if people treated in this way could still hold feelings of vengeance towards the allies. She says:

An einem bestimmten Punkt der Grausamkeit angekommen,
ist es schon gleich, wer sie begonnen hat:

Sie soll nur aufhören 8. April 1945 –

Both Schleyer, in the letter read by Kluge, and Wilde make the point that the appropriation of blame is ultimately futile in trying to resolve ideological differences, that any escalation in violence should be avoided or even, preferably, that the violence should just end. What, however, does a postwar emblem of capitalist enterprise and a housewife who narrowly survived the war have in common? On the surface, very little it would seem. What links their very different social trajectories is that that they are both victims of historical processes. With the inclusion of Wilde an associative structure is opened up to the spectator, one which couples the date 1945 with 1977, and so the 'history of confusion' outlined by the filmmakers at the beginning of this chapter. In order to better understand the associative structure which is central to both the funeral sequence and

Kluge's subsequent contribution, we first need to briefly address Kluge's theory of montage film.

In interview, Kluge consolidated his practice of associative montage by means of analogy which is worth including in full:

If a sailor such as Odysseus, for example, is sailing on the Mediterranean, he can determine his locations by taking the measurements of two stars; calculating the distance between the stars and between stars and the horizon with the help of a sextant, he can figure out his position. Montage involves nothing more than such measurements; it is the art of creating proportions. What is decisive in this case is that Odysseus does not measure the location itself, but rather the relationship; it is this relationship which is contained in the cut, at exactly the point where the film does not show anything³⁹

In the case of the prologue the spectator's two measurements are 1977 and 1945 and it precisely at the moment of the cut from Schleyer's funeral to Wilde's statement that it becomes the spectator's task to work on the relationship between the apparently opposing temporalities of the two dates, decoding the information in order to ascribe the level of proportion to images that are by no means self-contained. In Kluge's view, the logical form of the filmic text is, by itself, incomplete; it can only be completed by the spectator's spontaneous work on inferring meaning. Unlike the linear images of the news media which, for the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst*, offered a distorted picture of events due to their claim to truth and a closed meaning which was imposed on the television viewer, the images here remain open and ambiguous and require the spectator's active participation. The relationship between '1945' and '1977' is explored further by the alternative gaze of the camera at Schleyer's memorial service, which

³⁹ Alexander KLUGE, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', in *New German Critique* 24-25, Fall/Winter 1981/82, pp. 206-220 (219-20). For a more detailed discussion of Kluge's theory of montage, see HANSEN'S article 'Alexander Kluge's Contribution to *Germany in Autumn*'.

focuses on connotative historical associations and ironies. Here the camera seeks out three Esso flags in a lingering shot before panning down to a mourner who displays a dueling scar on his cheek. There is no audio track to pass comment on the images that the camera has located, yet there is a level of historical proportion that can be ascribed to them. As we saw in the previous chapter, Schleyer's Nazi past, coupled with his status as an icon of capitalism, had made him a target for the RAF. The inclusion of the flags points a tentative finger at National Socialist involvement in capitalist enterprise, thus raising the possibility for questions, which had otherwise been denied, about the persistence of that past on the present. Such associations, dismissed by the state as an example of the RAF's alleged *Realitätsverlust*, are also raised by the mourner with the duelling scar, a visible mark of the authoritarian past that cannot be hidden as easily as a repressed ideological stance which the state's detractors felt coloured contemporary thinking. Seemingly disparate images are set in relation to one another along a historical axis that begins in 1945 and 'ends' in 1977, but it is up to the spectator to decode the extent of their relationship because, as the filmmakers maintained of their own role, 'wir sind nicht klüger als die Zuschauer.'⁴⁰ Rather than establishing an overtly propagandistic, resolute hierarchy of historical accord, the filmmakers stress a degree of detachment. The process is more akin to what Kaes neatly terms the less strenuous process of 'relating images from the present to the past', and it is in this way that *Deutschland im Herbst* 'consciously sought to counter the collective amnesia'.⁴¹

This nexus of historical congruences is widened in scope by Kluge's further contributions which attempt to trace the roots of German history, and around which all of

⁴⁰ BRUSTELLIN ET AL, '*Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?*', p. 80.

⁴¹ KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p. 27.

the other episodes sit. Here we are introduced to another fictional character, the history teacher Gabi Teichert who, Kluge's voice-over tells us, is in doubt over what to teach in her classroom since the events of the 'German Autumn'. In part representative of Kluge, in part representative of Kluge's expectation of his audience, Teichert shares her creator's view of history as '*Eigensinn* (obstinacy, a will of its own)', to cite Elsaesser.⁴² Unlike the linear text books that she is supposed to teach from, Teichert discovers that German history is 'Kraut und Rüben' and so heads out into the frozen countryside with a shovel to dig for history. Kaes comments on how Kluge 'sees the recovery of history as reconstructive work involving memory, archaeology, and an active interest in the present.'⁴³ Although not a particularly subtle metaphor, digging for history in the frozen wastes of winter reverberates with Assmann's notion of the way cultural memory can be constructed as a means of freezing both history and undesired qualitative change. As we discussed in the previous chapter, based upon the theories of Lévi Strauss, Assmann suggests that in the production of cultural memory societies exhibit 'kalte' or 'heiße' tendencies, or even, and here he breaks from Strauss, a mixture of both. In a society which exhibits 'heiße' tendencies, the deployment of memories and fixed points in history are predicated on a 'gieriges Bedürfnis nach Veränderung', whereas those which exhibit 'kalte' tendencies remember in such a way that 'das Eindringen von Geschichte', which might threaten the reproduction of its identity, 'verhindert [wird].'⁴⁴ As Assmann goes on to note, providing a basis for Teichert's dissatisfaction with her text books and the organised, objectified view of culture they promote: 'Im Zeichen der "kalten" Optionen können auch Schrift und Herrschaftsinstitutionen zu Mitteln werden,

⁴² ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema*, p. 260.

⁴³ KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p. 319.

⁴⁴ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 68.

Geschichte einzufrieren.’⁴⁵ As we saw in Chapter 1, the Federal Republic deployed such ‘gedächtnispolitische Strategien’ in order to quarantine the threat the RAF posed to its collective identity, both in terms of its relationship to the Nazi past and its capitalist structures.⁴⁶ As a trope, the frozen landscape which Teichert encounters highlights the filmmakers’ relationship to the immediate past and their oppositional memory politics; namely providing counter memories which might frustrate, in Corrigan’s words, ‘television’s censorious command of the image’,⁴⁷ and furnishing counter historical readings which highlight, rather than play down, the ‘structuring absences’ over the Nazi past in Germany’s historical imagination.

Through Teichert, Kluge’s contribution begins a process of archaeology of German history in an attempt to locate the threads that might link ‘1977’ with the national past; in the figure of Teichert, digging for history becomes an attempt ‘die Dinge in ihrem Zusammenhang zu sehen.’ Kluge selects a series of images of Germany to present to the spectator as representative of the fruits of Teichert’s labours. Interspersed around the fictional contributions, Kluge presents images which chronicle the Crown Prince’s journey to suicide at Mayerling castle, alongside more modern sketches of a woman lying on the railway line in anticipation of an oncoming train which duly decapitates her. Newsreel footage from the 1930s shows the Nazi media reporting on the state funeral for the ‘desert fox’ field marshal Erwin Rommel; a hero of Hitler’s terrorist war in Africa, Rommel was ordered to commit suicide by his superiors following defeat

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ CORRIGAN, *New German Film*, p. 15.

at El-Alamein so that Hitler could celebrate him propagandistically as a national hero.⁴⁸ Clearly, given that Baader, Ensslin and Raspe were alleged to have taken their own lives in Stammheim prison, suicide stands another central metaphor, not just in Kluge's contribution, but to the film as a whole; in Kluge's voice-over narrating the journey of the ill-fated lovers to suicide at Mayerling castle, we hear that 'Selbstmord begeht, was nicht in diese Welt paßt.' Furthermore, we are reminded that Rommel was 'im Herbst 1944 vom Staat durch Gift getötet' on the order of his superiors. There are also images of the assassination of the King of Serbia by the German secret police and much later, in the footage of the burial for the Stammheim dead, the camera picks out masked mourners carrying a banner with the words 'wer die BRD angreift, begeht Selbstmord', a mordant expression of the belief carried by many of the RAF's supporters that the alleged suicide of Baader and his comrades was in fact a state-sanctioned murder. In the attempt to perform and prompt a labour of mourning on the very recent trauma of contemporary terror, Kluge utilizes images associated with German romanticism and nationalism which, as Sabine Hake maintains, have 'a central role in the traumas of German history.'⁴⁹

The filmic space left between the images of a Romantic tradition of suicide, enforced suicide under nationalism, a state assassination which thrust Europe to war and the later inclusion of suggestions from the margins that Baader's death was in fact a state murder avoids making explicit links. Again, the information is presented and the spectator is required to decode the meaning. Where Kluge is more direct, however, is

⁴⁸ Elsaesser picks up on an interesting historical irony that is missed by the filmmakers, namely that in the British press the German special forces team which stormed the hijacked 'Landshut' passenger liner in Mogadishu were referred to as 'desert foxes'. See Thomas ELSAESSER, *Terror und Trauma: Zur Gewalt des Vergangenen in der BRD* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007).

⁴⁹ Sabine HAKE, *German National Cinema* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 159.

through the direct cut between the state funerals for Rommel and Schleyer. Kluge's mention that Rommel's death was an instance of 'Ermordung durch den Staat' transcends the cut and interrogates the circumstances surrounding Schleyer's fate. As we saw in the previous chapter, the state refused to bargain with the terrorists which, as Wenzel notes, 'zusätzlich das "Todesurteil" for Schleyer bedeutete.'⁵⁰ In a similar vein to Rommel, whose death was instrumentalised by the Nazi state for its own propagandist purposes, Schleyer could be said to have been sacrificed by his superiors for the existential health of the postwar state, instrumentalised as a symbol of its virtues and moral and political legitimacy that was threatened by the terrorists. In a carefully selected line from one of Schleyer's letters to his son written during his captivity, the murdered industrialist posthumously comments on this dubious honour through Kluge's voice, noting that it is never sweet to die for the fatherland.

Perhaps the most astonishing historical parallel which runs through the film is the socio-historical trajectory of the Rommel family. During the newsreel footage of Erwin Rommel's state funeral, Kluge brings our attention to the field marshal's very young son Manfred who is present to mourn his father's death. As if testimony to the random process of history to which Kluge subscribes, in his adult life Manfred Rommel became Mayor of Stuttgart. It was in his official capacity as mayor that Rommel exhibited a measured response in an otherwise reactionary society, and quickly decided to grant a burial for Baader, Ensslin and Raspe on consecrated ground in a Stuttgart cemetery despite majority opinion that, as we learn in the film, the bodies should be 'in die städtische Müllkippe geworfen [werden].' Interviewed by the filmmakers, Rommel states: 'Ich weigere mich zu akzeptieren, daß es Friedhöfe erster und zweiter Klasse

⁵⁰ WENZEL, *Gedächtnisraum Film*, p. 251.

geben soll. Alle Feindschaft sollte nach dem Tode ruhen.' Presumably somewhat more sensitive to the ironies of history than his fellow citizens given his own family history, Rommel's humanitarian ethos echoes the process of *Trauerarbeit* which the film hopes to initiate; the recent past cannot simply be ignored or consigned to the rubbish heap, it needs to be given due thought and consideration.

Throughout the film the spectator is energized into considering the historical proportion of the images presented in which Kluge, as Elsaesser suggests, 'skillfully weaves together the terrorist present and the Nazi past, by exploiting to the full a series of remarkable [...] parallels and coincidences.'⁵¹ As we have seen, the spectator is central to the oppositional energies of the film which seek to challenge the closed media representations surrounding the 'German Autumn' and the RAF which the filmmakers felt had overwhelmed, even colonized the television audience's imagination. In *Deutschland im Herbst*, the spectator is implicated not in a passive role, but in a productive one. For Corrigan:

conventional films, even ambitious films made by conventionally celebrated auteurs, communicate according to a closed circuit of exchange between spectator and film; *Germany in Autumn* attempts to disrupt that circle in order to produce what Julia Kristeva calls an open text.⁵²

The hybrid form of *Deutschland im Herbst* works in conjunction with Kluge's notion of montage to integrate the spectator in the task of interpreting the images. Clearly influenced by Kluge's own theories, Corrigan also posits the spectator as 'the point of signification where meaning is made'.⁵³ The role of the spectator also informs the way the film seeks to create a counter memory that might trouble the stability of the official

⁵¹ ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema*, p. 260.

⁵² CORRIGAN, *New German Film*, p. 14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

memory record. Above all, *Deutschland im Herbst* was prompted by the filmmakers' fears over not just what was being forgotten, but by what was being remembered and in what form, the way in which remembering and forgetting were conspiring in the creation of a closed, state-sanctioned master narrative. By implicating the spectator in the creation of meaning behind the images being presented the film is trying to reinitiate public debate, to recreate an open text on the topic of the RAF not just within the confines of the film-reel but in the public sphere. As Fassbinder suggested that 'the film can encourage the viewer to have an opinion and to express it [...]. It can formulate anxieties.'⁵⁴ In a climate of political repression, in which Fassbinder's mother suggests 'Kritik unterbindet [ist]', *Deutschland im Herbst* attempts to simulate discussion by airing communicative memories of the 'German Autumn' and German history which the state sought to banish from public memory. In this way it seeks to counter the bearing of the news media's recounting of events on shaping the direction of conversation on the streets and in the work place. But besides facilitating fragments of communicative memory, such as the interview with Mahler, within the cultural formation of a film, the open structure of *Deutschland im Herbst* also attempts a dialogue of equally open exchange with the spectator. Cultural memory is characterized by the crystallization and cohesion of communicated meaning in the bid to achieve a stable and enduring identity formation at the level of the collective. But although film is a tool of cultural memory, the hybrid form of *Deutschland im Herbst* resists many of the implied characteristics of memory formation at the level of the cultural – stressing, for example, ambivalence over memory

⁵⁴ Rainer Werner FASSBINDER, *The Anarchy of the Imagination: Interviews, Essays, Notes*, ed., Michael Töteberg and Leo A. Lensing, trans., Krishna Winston (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, 1992), p. 128.

stabilization – and even strives to replicate, even reproduce the altogether more fluid process of identity formation at the communicative level, as we shall now see.

In an early interview during the production cycle of *Deutschland im Herbst*, Volker Schlöndorff gave his own impression of what motivated the genesis of the film, namely:

Weil *keiner allein damit fertig wird*, was im Herbst 77 passiert ist. Jeder hat das Bedürfnis, *mit anderen darüber zu sprechen*, und keiner kann sie anderswo überhaupt darstellen, diese unmerkliche Veränderungen in Richtung Angst, Verstummen, Verdrossenheit, Ratlosigkeit. Es wird ein Film von ganz alltäglichen Geschichten, nicht spektakulären, es gibt keine Polizeirazzia, es gibt keine Verfolgungsjagden, nichts dergleichen. Es gibt lauter inzwischen alltäglich gewordene, aber doch vor einem Jahr noch undenkbbare Situationen.⁵⁵

Schlöndorff's words here speak to the filmmaker's contention that the terrorism of the RAF and its meaning had been prematurely concluded as a now closed chapter that, organised by the hegemonic order in terms of a specialized 'Geschichtsbild' through which the collective might buttress its future unity and identity, the state could sign-off on. In stark contrast, for the filmmakers the memory of the immediate past should have found itself in an intense phase of debate, creation, manipulation and contestation at the diffuse level of the communicative, or 'everyday' within the collective, something that, as Schlöndorff notes above, the filmmakers tried to revive. Indeed, as Assmann states, one of the main distinguishing features between cultural and communicative formations of memory is that 'Das Geschichtsbild, das sich in diesen [kommunikativen, CH] Erinnerungen und Erzählungen konstituiert, ist eine "Geschichte des Alltags", eine

⁵⁵ BUSCHMANN, 'Deutschland im Herbst', p. 35 (my emphasis).

“Geschichte von unten”.⁵⁶ By attempting to formulate anxieties, pose questions and relate stories, *Deutschland im Herbst* not only tries to kick-start the communicative memory of the RAF, it also implicates itself as partner of exchange in everyday rather than cultural communication.

This is seen in a number of ways. By stressing the ‘German Autumn’ as ‘Schleierhaft’, and ‘die Geschichte der Verwirrung’, and by maintaining that ‘wir nicht klüger als die Zuschauer [sind]’, the filmmakers undermine their status as cultural bearers and position themselves as less involved in the cultural stabilization of memory, even a counter cultural memory, than but another voice in a debate informed from the bottom up.⁵⁷ Furthermore, besides largely refuting the stabilizing, organized forms of cultural memory formation and instead stressing thematic instability and disorganization, the filmic text seeks to replicate the reciprocity of roles that is a central tenet of communicative memory. Although the wilful, cohesive images and opinions of the state-media clearly fed into everyday communication surrounding the autumn of ’77, they were already invested in the transmission from communicative to cultural memory because, rather than functioning as a conversation partner in a reciprocal exchange, they were intended to *instruct* the collective in prescribed attitudes to recent events. In contrast, Kluge’s investment in the active role played by the spectator, who is placed at the conjunction of historical coincidences and ironies, ‘thus reopens a filmic dialogue between the audience and the image’, to cite Corrigan.⁵⁸ In this regard, the film might be said to refute Christian Metz’s claim that the cinema ‘is not a method of communication’; it ‘does not permit immediately bilateral exchange between a sender and a receiver: one

⁵⁶ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 51.

⁵⁷ BRUSTELLIN, ET AL., ‘*Deutschland im Herbst*: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?’ p. 81.

⁵⁸ CORRIGAN, *New German Film*, p. 9.

does not respond to a film with another film produced at that instant',⁵⁹ because, for Kluge 'it is the spectator who actually produces the film, as the film on screen sets in motion the film in the mind of the spectator.'⁶⁰ As far as Kluge is concerned, *Deutschland im Herbst* becomes a conversant in what is akin to a bilateral exchange; the unstable measurements of the montage provoke a 'reply' from the spectator, and which is not predetermined. The open dialogue between spectator and film here means that (s)he is implicated in constructing meaning which in turn implies a level of reciprocation – in the one moment the spectator is the listener, in the next (s)he responds, but not to a closed circuit of communication. Rather, returning to Corrigan, (s)he becomes the 'third angle', and so 'the point of signification where the meaning is made.'⁶¹ In doing so, and in spite of its status as part of the apparatus associated with cultural memory formation, the film goes some way to achieving the shifting roles of transmission which categorize 'alltägliche' communication.

The cameras of Kluge and Schlöndorff also search for alternative, 'alltägliche' perspectives and images to be found on the periphery of the pomp and ceremony that permeates Schleyer's memorial service, the 'polemical thrust' of which, Hansen asserts, 'is towards a deconstruction of the hierarchy of newsworthy events as presented by public television.'⁶² In a comedic scene, a Turkish immigrant, oblivious to the *Staatsakt* taking place behind him, is arrested for carrying a rifle which, he claims, he was using to shoot a pigeon for his lunch. By focusing on the everyday, even if bizarre, on the periphery of the memorial service, the film frustrates the *Außeralltäglichkeit* of cultural

⁵⁹ Cited in *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Cited in HANSEN, 'Alexander Kluge's Contribution to *Germany in Autumn*', p. 39.

⁶¹ CORRIGAN, *New German Film*, p. 16.

⁶² HANSEN, 'Alexander Kluge's Contribution to *Germany in Autumn*', p. 47.

memory. Schlöndorff's camera leaves the procession of funeral mourners to roam the venue – the Daimler Benz car museum where company flags are punctuated by monolithic portraits of Schleyer in his state-form, the scale of which seeks to overshadow his diminished stature in his recent incarnation as a RAF-prisoner. The film then cuts to Daimler Benz assembly-line workers as they observe a minute silence for their murdered chairman. In the DVD commentary to this scene, Schlöndorff suggests that upwards of 85% of the men were *Gastarbeiter*. For Elsaesser, the scene becomes 'ein indirekter Fingerzeig auf die Zwangsarbeiter, die Firmen wie Mercedes-Benz von Nazi-Rüstungsminister Albert Speer angefordert hatten',⁶³ but it also suggests a historically benign, yet equally subversive strategy: the ceremonialism surrounding Schleyer's elevation to an icon of a cohesive German 'Wir-Gefühl' is frustrated because, as Schlöndorff also notes, few of the men spoke any German and were largely oblivious to apparent importance of the man they were meant to mourn.⁶⁴ A similar effect is achieved when Schlöndorff's team films the reception team waiting on Schleyer's high-profile mourners. When asked who the reception is for, the lead waiter, also an immigrant, initially struggles to recall the murdered industrialist's name before erring over its pronunciation. A seemingly congenial man, he then directs his staff in reception protocol – the serving trays are to be held at chest height and smiles must be maintained – before sending them on their way with a curt 'marsch ab!' Finally, when the mourners at the burial for Baader, Ensslin and Raspe leave, the camera stays behind to capture another group of *Gastarbeiter* who are charged with the task of covering the simple coffins with

⁶³ Thomas ELSAESSER. *Terror und Trauma*, p. 68.

⁶⁴ Interview with Volker Schlöndorff, Art Haus DVD release of *Deutschland im Herbst* (2004).

earth. They carry out their work, also seemingly oblivious to who exactly they are they consigning to the ground.

Conclusion: 'Gegenöffentlichkeit' and preserving a mood

Deutschland im Herbst represents a filmic labour of mourning, or *Trauerarbeit*, situated in a climate of repression. By advancing alternative viewpoints and images not to be found in the federal government's tightly-regulated politics of information which imparted the need to address the traumatic events of the immediate past and their relationship to German history, the filmmakers hoped that their text might have a therapeutic effect. Above all, the text imparts the need to communicate, attempting to provide a catalytic stimulation of discussion. As such, the film is an attempt to facilitate Kluge's utopian undertsanding of 'Gegenöffentlichkeit', or oppositional public sphere, which, he maintains, should increase 'the possibilities for a public articulation of experience'.⁶⁵ We will reserve discussion of the film's effectiveness in this regard for the beginning of Chapter 4, but for now I wish to conclude by considering the film's status nearly thirty years after its release. In *Deutschland im Herbst: Terrorismus im Film*, released to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the 'German Autumn' in 1997, Wolfgang Landgraeber had the following to say about the film which lends this short study its name:

Immerhin wirkte *Deutschland im Herbst* bei der ersten Betrachtung 1978 wie aus einem Guß. Als ich den Film jetzt wiedersah, hatte ich einen gegenteiligen Eindruck: er wirkt zerfahren, manche Elemente passen nicht zueinander, andere, wie der Ausschnitt aus Schubert/Mainkas Dokumentarfilm *Standhafte Schatten*

⁶⁵ KLUGE, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 211. For a more detailed examination of 'Gegenöffentlichkeit', see HANSEN'S 'Alexander Kluge's Contribution to *Germany in Autumn*'.

über ein Bundeswehrmanöver, fallen völlig aus dem Zusammenhang der filmischen Argumentation.⁶⁶

Certainly, the film shows signs of age, now nearly thirty years after it was made. But although, in contrast to Landgraeber, I would maintain that *Deutschland im Herbst* still works 'wie aus einem Guß' in terms of its own scheme of politics of information, namely the desire to combat repression along a historical axis that began in 1945 and flared in 1977, it does, however, expose the aesthetic nonconformity which characterized the New German Cinema. Cloos and Rupé's fictional contribution, the visual and thematic coda of which is melodrama, is in Hansen's view a 'rather embarrassing sketch – with "Tatort" touch – of everyday paranoia' in the example of female pianist who allows an injured stranger in to her home.⁶⁷ About the best that anyone has had to say about the contribution is Alter, for whom it 'fulfils a capital function in relation to other more serious features of the film: clarifying and reinforcing their message.'⁶⁸ While this is a valid point, the overtly melodramatic impetus of the episode – including an audio track composed of strings and percussion instruments reaching a cacophonous scream when the spectator is supposed to feel the most tense – shapes the spectator's perspective to an extent that stands at odds with the open structure of the whole, adhering too closely to Corrigan's notion of a 'closed circuit of exchange between film and spectator' mentioned above.

The Schlöndorff/Böll contribution focuses on the fictional cancellation of a television production of Sophocles' *Antigone*. The committee's disquiet is roused by the

⁶⁶ Wolfgang LANDGRAEBER, 'Das Thema "Terrorismus" in deutschen Spielfilmen 1975-1985'. in Petra KRAUS, Petra KRAUS, Natalie LETTENWITSCH, Ursula SAEKEL, Brigitte BRUNS, Matthias MERSCH (eds.), *Deutschland im Herbst: Terrorismus im Film* (München: Münchner Filmzentrum, 1997), 11-21 (15).

⁶⁷ HANSEN, 'Cooperative Auteur Cinema and Oppositional Public Sphere', p. 46.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 62.

unexpected relevance of the piece; ancient themes of conflict, rebellion between the individual and the state, state-denied burial and suicide are deemed 'zu aktuell' and potentially pro-activist, thus leading to the committee's labelling of the programme as 'ein Terrorstück.' The strength of message carried by the Schlöndorff/Böll contribution, as well as its aesthetic bias toward melodrama, has also been problematic for scholars, with Hansen, to name but one, feeling that 'it almost too strenuously spells out a unifying significance which the film in its overall structure seems to evade.'⁶⁹ Nonetheless, and although the way in which the episode bares its teeth is problematic for the overall open structure of Kluge's montage framework, the sequence is an undeniably powerful, and biting satire for the time on the issue of artistic freedom in a reactionary, censorious climate. The Schlöndorff/Böll segment speaks to a situation that the author Gerhard Zwerenz had warned of:

Whenever the economic, legal, or political structures have become so powerful that film, theatre, and literature can no longer be treated as vital concerns of society, especially those conversational topic dealing with power, force, and the exercise thereof (treatment of which could result in a work of art offensive to the authorities), then creative freedom no longer exists, despite frequent and vociferous assertions to the contrary.⁷⁰

No direct censorship is required to halt the production of *Antigone*. Rather, the political caution of the fictional committee members is enough for them to withdraw their financial support, indirectly resulting in their desired aim of halting the production in its track. Returning to the metaphor of frozen history, the committee's decision is 'den Film auf Eis legen, und warten bis ruhigeren Zeiten.'

⁶⁹ HANSEN, 'Alexander Kluge's Contribution to *Germany in Autumn*', p. 46

⁷⁰ Cited in Hans Günther PFLAUM, *Germany on Film: Theme and Content in the Cinema of the Federal Republic of Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), p. 68

In interview Schlöndorff has suggested that the wholly fictional contributions to the film, including his own, 'gealtet sind' from a modern perspective. However, he goes on to suggest that certain of the elements in *Deutschland im Herbst* have retained their validity and vitality, singling out the Fassbinder contribution and, moreover, the alternative images of a country captured by the film in its function as a document or record of this historical era.⁷¹ As Kaes has commented elsewhere, 'history preserved or re-created in filmed images does not fade or yellow'.⁷² In this regard, thirty years after the event, *Deutschland im Herbst* succeeds in preserving the images of a history – such as document of the burial for Baader, Ensslin and Raspe – relating to one side of a conversation which, in the filmmakers' view, would otherwise not have been told. As such, the film also aims to function as a 'Speichergedächtnis', a form of archival memory within cultural memory.⁷³ This gesture of mnemonic preservation serves as a repository for alternative historical images and memories which, deemed inappropriate by the authorities, might otherwise have been allowed to fade and yellow with time. Above all, *Deutschland im Herbst* seeks to strengthen the link between public memory surrounding the 'German Autumn' and personal experiences, including the filmmakers' own, in a subjective form which might counter the objectification of history by the hegemonic order.

⁷¹ Interview with Volker Schlöndorff on the *Art Haus* DVD release of *Deutschland im Herbst* (2004).

⁷² Anton KAES, 'History and Film: Public Memory in the Age of Electronic Dissemination', in Bruce A. MURRAY and Christopher J. WICKHAM (eds.), *From the Past: The Historiography of German Cinema and Television* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), pp. 308-326 (317).

⁷³ See ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 96.

Chapter 3

‘Verdrängen oder verarbeiten?’: Memory, Mourning and Contemporary Repression in *Die bleierne Zeit* (1981)

Played out against the background of West German terrorism during the 1970s, Margarethe von Trotta’s *Die bleierne Zeit* charts the conflicted personal relationship between Marianne and Juliane Klein – fictionalized counterparts to RAF luminary Gudrun Ensslin and her sister Christiane – who grew up in the ‘leaden years’ of the 1950s, to which von Trotta suggests the film’s title refers.¹ As teenagers Juliane is a belligerent rebel whereas her sister is content to play the role of ‘daddy’s girl’ to their father, a stringent Protestant minister with roots in the *bekennende Kirche*, or confessing church. Shaped by their upbringing, both girls develop a strong social conscience, but by the time they reach adulthood their roles appear to have switched: Marianne abandons her husband and young child, Jan, to lead a terrorist organisation which advocates violent change, whereas Juliane works towards peaceful reform by working as a journalist for a progressive women’s magazine and campaigning against abortion laws. Told from Juliane’s perspective, we join the narrative near to its conclusion: Marianne is dead, the result of an alleged suicide in prison following her capture by the state, and Juliane has taken sole charge of caring for her now orphaned nephew, a duty she had previously refused. A series of flashbacks triggered in Juliane by present events convey the bulk of the film’s narrative progression and cover a substantial time frame, following the sisters from their adolescence in the 1950s, to university in the 1960s before eventually synchronizing with the present and Marianne’s death, which Juliane, we discover, has since been working relentlessly to

¹ Cited in Lisa DICAPRIO, ‘Marianne and Juliane/The German Sisters. Baader-Meinhof Fictionalized,’ in Terri GINSBERG and Kirsten Moana THOMPSON (eds.), *Perspectives on German Cinema* (New York: Schuster Macmillan, 1996), pp. 391-401 (391). The title of Dicaprio’s essay

prove was in fact a state-sanctioned murder. But when Juliane attempts to voice her findings in the public sphere, the media shows no interest in a personal account of her sister's life and death; as far as the newspaper she approaches is concerned, the matter is resolved and there is nothing more to be said. Thus Juliane's recourse is to the familial sphere where, in the film's closing scene, she begins to pass Marianne's story on to her embittered son Jan.

Die bleierne Zeit arose from von Trotta's experiences during the production of *Deutschland im Herbst*, where she assisted her then husband Volker Schlöndorff with filming the burial for the Stammheim dead. It was here that she met Christiane Ensslin who also appears briefly in the Kluge-driven collective film: in another instance of *Deutschland im Herbst's* desire to preserve alternative voices on recent events, Christiane is granted a forum in which to air her own views on the disputed burial for her sister. Von Trotta's introduction to Christiane had a lasting impact on the filmmaker, who had the following to say about the encounter in interview:

Ich war von ihr so fasziniert [...]. Danach wurde aus der Faszination eine enge Freundschaft. Ich bewundere Christiane: Diese Frau, die in der Öffentlichkeit nur als die "Ensslin-Schwester" gilt, macht mich betroffen und fordert mich so stark heraus, daß sie nicht nur mein Film, sondern auch mich sehr stark inspiriert hat. Wie kommt sie dazu, diesen einsamen Weg zu gehen, um den Beweis zu erbringen, daß ihre Schwester sich nicht selbst umgebracht hat?²

In a very public declaration, von Trotta sought to rescue Christiane from her reductive, media-imposed persona of 'Ensslin-Schwester' by dedicating *Die bleierne Zeit* to her, which opens with the words 'für Christiane.' In a very public gesture, von Trotta gave the publicly received 'Täter-Schwester' her name back, even if, as we

reflects the film's international titles; *Marianne and Juliane* in America, and *The German Sisters* in Great Britain.

² Daniel COHN-BENDIT, 'Verdrängen oder verarbeiten?', *tageszeitung Magazin*, 25 September, 1981.

shall see in due course, this gesture did not come without its own consequences for her film.

The apparent gulf between clamorous official public memory and muted unwanted private memories of the recent past, which the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* felt characterized collective discourse on the 'German Autumn,' is thus also a central concern of von Trotta's film. As we shall see in the course of this chapter, despite Juliane's diegetic failure to transcribe her personal memories into public memory, as a mass-mediated text *Die bleierne Zeit* transmits them on her behalf and so performs the importance of communicative transmission to a contemporary audience at a time when strategies of forgetting in official memory threatened not just to lock out undesirable voices, but even to render the recent past all but invisible. Although different in aesthetic form the overall montage strategy of *Deutschland im Herbst*, von Trotta's filmic call for memory similarly refutes the state's claim of a cathartic resolution to the terrorism of the RAF, insisting instead that the Baader-Meinhof generation of terrorists left a traumatic wound in their wake which needs to be properly healed and not prematurely sutured. Focusing on Juliane's attempt to mourn her sister's death and come to terms with her turn to terror, I will examine how *Die bleierne Zeit* enacts the need for *Trauerarbeit* in a bid to halt the flow of contemporary repression which, it was felt, threatened to engulf the memory of the RAF. As von Trotta motioned in interview:

Wenn man diesen Film auf eine Thematik bringen will, so ist es die Konfrontation von Erinnern und Vergessen. Die Allgemeinheit vergißt, es sind immer nur einzelne Menschen, die sich wehren zu vergessen, die sich erinnern wollen.³

³ Margarethe VON TROTТА, cited on the sleeve to the 1997, *451 Video* release of *Die bleierne Zeit*.

But more so than the need simply to hold on to memory, in *Die bleierne Zeit* we again see the question of *which* memories to preserve. Von Trotta's recourse is also to counter-memories, specifically dissident communicative memories which, in this example, are fostered by private family memory.

Indeed, Juliane's need to grieve her sister does not begin and end with Marianne's life as a terrorist, but rather requires her to process their shared past also. In so doing, Juliane's private family memories rearticulate previously repressed material for her director's public audience; specifically the traumatic legacy of the largely buried National Socialist past, which von Trotta, going a step further than the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst*, imbues with a decisive, animating function in provoking contemporary left-wing terrorism. As we saw in Chapter 1, at the height of terrorist activity, the negative integration of the RAF's violent excesses by the state had effectively closed down any claim that 'West German terrorism was a tortured form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*,' to cite Varon.⁴ However, through recourse to family memories which fall outside of the state's structuring techniques, *Die bleierne Zeit* constructs a counter-historical reading which challenge's the 'structuring absences' in the state's historical imagination, both in terms of the Nazi past, the increasingly distant memory of the immediate terrorist past, and the extent of the abnormal historical co-dependency which seemingly exists between them. I conclude the chapter by returning to von Trotta's emphasis on personal commitment to consider how the family sphere might act as a site of resistance in defiance of the closed narratives and perspectives embodied by the state's discursive settlement. Moreover, in the figure of Marianne's young son Jan, I suggest that von Trotta posits a possible site of healthy resolution for cycles of historical violence. However, in order to

⁴ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 15.

contextualize our own reading of the film, we first need to consider the myriad appraisals of the film, and to which we now turn.

Can the personal be political?: the heated critical reception of *Die bleierne Zeit*

In the twenty five or so years since its release, *Die bleierne Zeit* has been called many things by critics, comparatively few of them positive. But that *Die bleierne Zeit* arguably provoked more controversy than any of the other works of the New German Cinema which sought to engage the issue of urban terrorism is perhaps surprising, if we consider the film's promising start on the festival circuit. At a press screening during the 1981 Venice Film Festival, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* film critic, W. Schütte, had the following to say about von Trotta's third solo feature: 'Als Cineast fand ich den Film eher konventionell und bieder, aber irgendwie hebt er an einem bestimmten Moment ab und am Ende war ich dem Weinen nah, und daß bei mir die Tränen kommen, bedeutet wirklich viel'.⁵ The film went on to win the festival's highest accolade (the Golden Lion) and it seemed as though the public and journalists alike would not have had it any other way.

Riding the momentum gained abroad, *Die bleierne Zeit* returned home to West Germany for its national release. But although the film was awarded the *Bundesfilmpreis* as well as the *Preis der Deutschen Filmkritik* in 1982, for the majority of domestic commentators such accolades were sorely misplaced. As such, the bestowment of the *Bundesfilmpreis* did not go unchallenged and on 24 June 1982 Johann Erhard and Rudolf Rau launched a vehement attack on the film and its director across the pages of the *tageszeitung*. Like most of the, oftentimes, acerbic criticism fired at von Trotta's film, Erhard and Rau rounded on its assumed claim to historical truth which they felt was evident in the filmmaker's dedication of *Die bleierne Zeit* to

Christiane. With a vitriolic tone, Erhard and Rau attacked what they saw as the 'Schamlosigkeit der dabei entstehenden Geschichtsfälschung', condemning the inaccuracies in the film's time line, and the apparent liberties taken the sisters' lives.⁶

Erhard and Rau were not alone in their insistence on reading the film as a fatally flawed docudrama, a tendency which similarly led to numerous polemically charged readings, even diatribes against von Trotta's fictionalized narrative amongst critics, and which we will shortly come to. However, *Die bleierne Zeit* is closer in tone to James M. Skidmore's reading of a 'semi-biographical account,'⁷ but, while the historical model which informs the text is undeniable, even this does not take in to account the numerous other biographies, both real and imagined, which the director claims informed her narrative film:

Sie [Christiane] und ich gehören ja beide zur gleichen Generation, die den Krieg als Kinder miterlebt haben und in den 50er Jahren aufgewachsen sind. So gibt es in diesem Film so viele Momente, die mit mir mehr zu tun haben als mit Christiane, und gleichzeitig Dinge, die weder mit ihr noch mit mir zu tun haben, sondern mit meinen Phantasien über Frauen aus der Generation.⁸

Certainly, that the 17 year old Juliane (Ina Robinska) bears a closer physical resemblance to von Trotta than either her adult self (Jutta Lampe) or Christiane Ensslin points to the biographical amalgam of which the director speaks. Furthermore then, it would seem that the biographical parallels only mark the departure point for a narrative personification of the various individual and collective memories, experiences and developments which shaped the course of the director's generation; an allegorical or symbolic composite of sorts. As such, the film makes no claim for an unmediated representation or historical authenticity, but rather stresses its status as a

⁵ Cited in COHN-BENDIT, 'Verdrängen oder Verarbeiten.'

⁶ Johan ERHARD and Rudolf RAU, 'Trotta's Preis oder Das zerissene Bild der Gudrun Ensslin', *tageszeitung*, 24 June 1982.

⁷ James M. SKIDMORE, 'Intellectualism and Emotionalism in Margarethe von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit*', *German Studies Review*, 25:3 (2002), pp. 551-567 (553).

subjective consolidation of various memory fragments. As Skidmore warns, the reluctance or inability of scholars to look beyond the real-life models of Gudrun and Christiane Ensslin

has the potential of placing ideology ahead of understanding the work of art on its own terms. The more one expects the film to relate the “true” story of the Ensslin sisters, the less one is able to view the work as artistic representation in its own right.⁹

As von Trotta maintained, ‘Ich wollte keinen platt politischen Film’, a decision that, for the director at least, mandated a turn away from pure documentary.¹⁰ But this statement acted like a red rag to a bull, provoking the response from Erhard and Rau that: ‘Wenn der Film, nach Trotta, nicht platt politisch ist, so paßt er offenbar gerade als das zutiefst unpolitische Machwerk, das er ist, in die politische Landschaft dieses Staates’.¹¹ Besides frustrating their desire for historical ‘truth’, critics such as Erhard and Rau could not reconcile themselves to the outcome of von Trotta’s artistic strategy of ‘Personalisierung und Privitasierung des öffentlichen Geschehens’ which saw Baader and Raspe erased, and seemingly made little or no attempt to engage with current public discussions on urban terrorism. Above all, they were outraged that through a ‘private Schwesterngeschichte ein Konzentrat der Wirklichkeit Deutschlands und seiner jüngsten Geschichte filmisch ins Bild gestetzt werden.’¹²

Echoing Erhard and Rau, for Delorme the personalization of public events trivialized, even erased the politics of terror in the 1970s by portraying the ‘armed resistance of the RAF [...] as nothing more than the work of a few guys, such as the

⁸ Cited in COHN-BENDIT, ‘Verdrängen oder verarbeiten’.

⁹ SKIDMORE, ‘Intellectualism and Emotionalism’, p. 556.

¹⁰ Cited in ERHARD and RAU, ‘*Trotta's Preis oder Das zerissene Bild der Gudrun Ensslin*’.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

slightly hysterical sister Marianne.’¹³ Above all, it was precisely this representation of the female terrorist which outraged critics such as Delorme, who, rigidly adhering to the film’s historical model, perceived *Die bleierne Zeit* as the unscrupulous vessel for ‘posthumous vengeance’; a chance for Christiane to commend herself by condemning Gudrun/Marianne in an act of jealous spite.¹⁴ Even more measured responses, such as that from Ellen Seiter, support the view that ‘Juliane serves as a model of responsible, social democratic oppositional politics, while Marianne epitomizes irresponsible, pathological opposition.’¹⁵ For Delorme, this neutered von Trotta’s own oppositional credentials because her narrative therefore recuperated the terrorist of the hegemonic imagination, thus rendering the film ‘more effective than any state anti-guerilla propaganda since it appears to come “from their own ranks.”’¹⁶ In a similar vein, Barton Byg argues that the film ‘seeks to remove the threat posed by both the “terrorist sister” as an image of woman and the metaphorical threat she poses to the stability of the German state.’¹⁷ Consequently, Marianne’s death becomes necessary to what he perceives as the director’s attempt to restore harmony to the patriarchal state and its monopoly on violence which, as a female terrorist, Marianne had usurped. In this way, Byg claims, the film ‘contributes to the legitimation of the existing order.’¹⁸

¹³ Charlotte DELORME, ‘On the Film *Marianne and Juliane* by Margarethe von Trotta’, *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 37, no 2, Spring (1985), pp. 47-51 (48).

¹⁴ Referring to ‘Christiane Ensslin’s “authentic” distortion of reality’, Delorme emphasises the tensions between the Ensslin sisters to suggest that von Trotta presented Christiane with ‘the opportunity to see herself on film just the way she had always pictured herself’. As she adds: ‘So Juliane (Christiane) tells the story this way: “It was always Marianne/Gudrun who stood out, but actually it is I, Juliane/Christiane who is right.”’ See DELORME, ‘On the Film *Marianne and Juliane*’, pp. 49-50.

¹⁵ Ellen SEITER, ‘The Personal is Political: Margarethe von Trotta’s *Marianne and Juliane*’, *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 37, no 2, Spring (1985), pp. 41-46 (44-45).

¹⁶ DELORME, ‘On the Film *Marianne and Juliane*’, p. 50.

¹⁷ Barton BYG, ‘German History and Cinematic Convention Harmonized in Margarethe von Trotta’s *Marianne and Juliane*’, in Sandra FRIEDEN, Richard M. McCORMICK, Viebke R. PETERSON and Laurie Melissa VOGELSANG (eds.), *Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions. Vol. II: German History on Film* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), pp. 259-271 (260).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

Thus from this brief rehearsal of the critical terrain, we can see that scholarly opinion has tended to paint a rather bleak picture of *Die bleierne Zeit* as a vessel for the alleged 'Neid, Eifersucht und Geschwisterhaß' of Christiane, to return to Erhard and Rau, which is perversely consensual rather than critical in its depiction of terrorism.¹⁹ Such fears will be dispelled as our own reading progresses. But of most pertinence to our immediate discussion, however, is the overall disquiet surrounding the suitability of the personal as an optic for engaging the public memory and events associated with the 'German Autumn.' Indeed, the notion of a family squabble notwithstanding, we have seen Delorme's denunciation of the film for its apparent 'reduction of politically motivated actions to matters of family history.' Less a fight for liberation from alleged capitalist oppression, for Delorme the personalization of the period revised the political claims of the RAF to an unresolved oedipal conflict between Marianne and her father, the strict minister and so overbearing authority figure.²⁰ Such a view was also put forward by Elsaesser, who averred that the film 'depicts the working law of the family as the motivational core of terrorism.'²¹ But in most quarters, however, family commitment was not the source of, but rather erased any indication of what could have radicalized Marianne to the extent that she would have committed violence against others. Thus, leading the charge, Seiter complains that 'when Marianne made the transition from daddy's girl to terrorist, we have no information about the characters.'²² However, I argue that the recourse to the private, family sphere does not diminish the 'German Autumn' as a political event, but is a subversive strategy which rather illuminates a dimension to the RAF's politicization and motivation to commit acts of terror otherwise hidden in dominant discourse.

¹⁹ ERHARD and RAU, '*Trottas Preis oder Das zerissene Bild der Gudrun Ensslin*'.

²⁰ DELORME, 'On the Film *Marianne and Juliane*', p. 48. The same view is shared by BYG; see his 'German History and Cinematic Convention Harmonized', p. 263.

²¹ ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema*, p. 235.

Indeed, inspired by Fassbinder's contribution to *Deutschland im Herbst*, which von Trotta cites as the 'most successful example of how a personal testimony can be translated into a political statement',²³ with *Die bleierne Zeit* the female filmmaker follows what Sabine Hake cites as the 'basic tenet' of feminist filmmaking; the conviction that 'the personal is political.'²⁴ Von Trotta's synthesis of shared private memories and past experiences becomes a political intervention on the disputed role of the Nazi past in shaping contemporary terror, a composite testimony of a generation stigmatized and radicalized by the unprocessed trauma of Nazi crimes.

As Marc Silberman has noted, *Die bleierne Zeit* does little to elucidate the publicly visible 'political terrain' or 'ideological convictions' of the RAF's activity in the 1970s;²⁵ Marianne is only glimpsed twice as an active terrorist, and speaks largely in abstractions rather than concrete terms and the film seems to consciously ignore the prevalent debates on the group's political legitimacy. But as we saw in *Deutschland im Herbst*, at a time when filmmakers felt that public opinion was being shaped disproportionately by the state's careful orchestration of such issues in support of its own perspective, the desire to provide an alternative account was seen to necessitate, to a large extent, a turn to the individual and family memories which should constitute the communicative phase of memory. Thus rather than engaging directly in what was viewed as the closed information network of cultural formation, *Die bleierne Zeit* seeks to supplement (in the hope of counteracting) the official historiography which underpins the state's cultural memory through a counter-historiography supported by counter-memories excluded from the state's attempt to stabilize meaning around the

²² SEITER, 'The Personal is Political', p. 45.

²³ Margarethe VON TROTTA, 'A Sure Instinct', in Juliane LORENZ (ed.), *Chaos as usual: Conversations about Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (New York & London: Applause, 1997), pp. 125-29 (125).

²⁴ See Sabine HAKE, *German National Cinema* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 166.

'German Autumn.' Von Trotta, therefore, advocates a move away from the *Außertäglichkeit* of cultural formation in an attempt to rearticulate *alltägliche* memories. For von Trotta, the 'truth' that can be derived from the state's formal documentation of the immediate past is secondary to, and might even be punctured by, the information that can be yielded from the enactment of communicative testimony.

It is in the same sense that the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* felt that simply debating the rightness or wrongness of terrorism would have resulted in 'ein bilderloser Film',²⁶ that von Trotta avers 'Ich wollte keinen Film über den Terrorismus [...] drehen.' In von Trotta's view, precisely this would have been a 'platt politischen Film' which *would* have threatened to answer Byg's claim of supporting the hegemony's imagination. It was such regulated discursive practices which the filmmakers viewed as hiding the current social and historical implications of the RAF from view.

Somewhat ironically, Marianne shares Delorme's blinkered view of family history as a source of illumination on the trajectory of the present. Incensed by Juliane's decision to write a magazine article about her, Marianne rebukes her sister, declaring that '*du kannst mich nicht aus unserer persönlichen Geschichte heraus beschreiben. Meine Geschichte beginnt erst mit den anderen.*'²⁷ Juliane's retort, however, simultaneously answers both her sister and Delorme: 'Als sei unsere Kindheit keine Wirklichkeit. Außerdem glaube ich, daß wir uns aus unserer persönlichen Geschichte nicht befreien können.' Here Juliane speaks directly to von

²⁵ See Marc SILBERMAN, *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 205.

²⁶ BRUSTELLIN ET AL., 'Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?', p. 80. Here the collective suggests: 'Wir sind nicht die Oberamtsrichter des Zeitgeschehens. Als Filmmemacher ist es nicht unsere Sache, zu den hunderttausend Auffassungen, die es zu Terror hier

Trotta's own strategy for creating counter perspectives which, if George Lipsitz is to be believed, demands a turn from the public to the private:

Counter-memory is a way of remembering and forgetting that starts with the local, the immediate and the personal. [...] Counter-memory starts with the particular and the specific and then *builds outwards towards a total story*. Counter-memory looks to the past for hidden stories excluded from dominant narratives.²⁸

In a bid to frustrate the state's 'total story' on terrorism, which chiefly denied the past, instead locating the terrorism of the RAF as a hysterical, synchronic anomaly, von Trotta starts at the beginning in a bid to shed light on a diachronic progression.

Die bleierne Zeit addresses the competing tendencies operating within *Erinnerungskultur* with regard to the RAF, namely the issue of 'verdrängen oder verarbeiten', as Daniel Cohn-Bendit suggested in an early review.²⁹ As we move into the second part of this chapter, we will see that Juliane remembers in order to mourn her sister, a process which refutes, rather than promoting, the perceived 'structuring absences' surrounding the Nazi past in the state's discourse on contemporary terror. As Silberman usefully suggests, *Die bleierne Zeit* dilates 'personal and national history in the quest for postwar identity', thus raising the question of 'whether the repressed past (fascism) or contemporary repression (terrorism) drives German society'.³⁰

'A cry in the echo chamber of the Nazi past.' Family commitment and the return of the repressed.

As we have touched upon, despite psychological similarities derived from a common childhood, Marianne and Julian have taken very different paths in their adult lives, an

und dort gibt, zu "Strafanspruch des Staates bis ins letzte Glied" gibt, die hunderttausendunderste richtige theorie zu liefern.' See *ibid.*

²⁷ My emphasis.

²⁸ George LIPSITZ, *Time Passages: Collective memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 213.

ideological divergence which forms the greatest source of conflict in their relationship. Neither sister can identify with the political perspective of the other, leading to heated arguments over the revolutionary potential of their work:

Marianne: Findest du deine Arbeit dort wirklich wichtig?

Juliane: Ja. Notwendig.

Marianne: Früher hättest du dich damit nicht zufriedengegeben. Du konntest immer so konsequent sein Jule.

Juliane: Daran hat sich nichts geändert. Aber deine Konsequenz halte ich für falsch.

Marianne has become bitterly resentful of Juliane's peaceful pursuit of reason and her apparent submission to a bourgeois lifestyle. When Marianne, on the run, makes demands on Juliane's hospitality in the early hours of the morning, she finds her sister's amiability to be in short supply. Having scouted the flat for anything of use, Marianne tells her sister to 'schlaf schön weiter', which reveals more about her opinion of Juliane's political effectiveness than the disturbance caused. Equally, however, referring to her own attempts, and those of others, to achieve reform from within the system she opposes, Juliane later consolidates her view that Marianne's decision to throw bombs is a false conviction:

Wir arbeiten Marianne, seit Jahren. Was wir machen ist wichtig und nicht nur für mich. Es waren kleine, manchmal winzige Erfolge... Aber mit euren Bomben habt ihr alles zerstört, habt ihr unsere Arbeit behindert.

However, with the advent of Marianne's death, Juliane is compelled to reassess their relationship, and while she does not change her opinion on the use of terrorism, she attempts to understand and come to terms with her sister's trajectory. It is through this process that present and past collide, requiring the surviving sister to examine the role that German political history played in shaping their present, and the search for which

²⁹ See COHN-BENBIT, 'Verdrängen oder Verarbeiten?', p. 11.

³⁰ SILBERMAN, *German Cinema: Texts in Context*, pp. 200-01.

begins at the level of family commitment. Although she condemns the means of protest, she recognizes the terrorism of her sister as an unresolved trauma that needs to be processed. *Deutschland im Herbst* attempted to articulate the strange historical symbiosis between 1945 and 1977 in the context of West German society through its ambiguous and ambivalent juxtaposition of historical images but with the filmmakers ultimately stating that 'wir sind nicht klüger als die Zuschauer.'³¹ While von Trotta does not claim a privileged insight either, her film is more direct in its approach, the result of which is an attempt to further the spectator's critical understanding of *why* the events of the autumn of 1977 might be associated with 1945.

The clearest indication of the direction of the film is in the title. As E. Ann Kaplan points out, 'the American title [*Marianne and Juliane*] foregrounds the sisters over history and encourages a reading of the film as "merely" about women's issues', the danger of which is, 'oversimplifying the film's complex arguments and ignoring the intricate interconnections that the film exposes within history – past and present, national and personal – and that are built into its discourses'.³² Indeed, in contrast to the historically innocuous international title, von Trotta insists that the domestic title of *Die bleierne Zeit*, taken from *Der Gang aufs Land* by poet Friedrich Hölderlin, stresses 'the continuing weight of the past on the present' during her generation's formative decade of socialization, the so-called 'fake fifties' which privileged rehabilitation and reconstruction over the excavation of past crimes and their moral implications.³³ In the context of von Trotta's film, Hölderlin's phrase also provides a link between historical repression in the 1950s and contemporary political repression in the 1970s. Von Trotta's visual realism, in particular her choice of locations,

³¹ BRUSTELLIN ET AL, '*Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?*', p. 80.

³² E. Ann KAPLAN, 'Discourses of Terrorism, Feminism, and the Family in von Trotta's *Marianne and Juliane*', *Persistence of Vision*, 1:2, Spring (1985), pp. 61-68 (61).

³³ Cited

reinforces this notion of the prevalence of the past in the present. For example, the sisters' first meeting since Marianne joined the terrorist underground takes place in a museum's clearing yard. The sisters have much to discuss and so walk and talk, wandering past countless broken stone sculptures of historical figures which have been forgotten, consigned to a state of limbo in a holding pen for broken images of the past until such time as the museum directors see fit to restore and incorporate them into current exhibits. As such, they impart a dual symbolism, at once evoking the notion of the heavy burden of history on the present, but in their state of disrepair also pointing to the way in which the recent past is in need of 'restoration'; it has to be dealt with and then reintegrated into contemporary society.

Aside from the museum yard, courtyards in general, as well as hallways and interiors dominate the film. The continuity between the look of the spaces the sisters occupy in the present and the spaces they occupied in the past emphasises the numbing changelessness of history for them; the prison yard in which Marianne finds herself during the latter half of the film bears a striking resemblance to the yard in which the sisters compete at holding head-stands the longest as children during the 1950s. The sombre atmosphere of the locations is supplemented by the sober aesthetics of the film's look. Paul Coates refers to *Die bleierne Zeit* as a film, 'which is black and white in colour' or an 'anticolour film'.³⁴ Indeed the film's colour palette stresses cold blues, greys and browns in both the flashbacks to the girls' childhood and their present lives. Having the same colour palette for past and present is a further way in which von Trotta suggests that little has changed in thirty years of German history and, unlike conventional filmic strategies of delineating the past from the

³⁴ COATES, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, p. 226.

present through the use of an opposing colour scheme for flashbacks, the film suggests no sense of nostalgia or longing for the past.

However, it is specifically through the narrative function of a series of flashbacks that *Die bleierne Zeit* goes on to exceed the tentative historical continuities proposed by *Deutschland im Herbst*, moving to a more determined insistence on the manifest persistence of the National Socialist past in informing the filmmakers' present. The flashbacks (the temporal sequencing of which is disjointed) cover a substantial period - from 1945 to 1980 – and can be divided, roughly speaking into two groups. The first group covers Marianne's radicalization, imprisonment and death during the seventies and the second less linear group covers the years 1945, 1947, 1955 and 1968 (with an additional flashback to around 1947 in the form of a dream when Juliane suffers a nervous collapse after she is confronted with her sister's dead body). The driving force of the sequence of abruptly edited flashbacks is to establish how Marianne and Juliane were burdened with a deep sense of guilt for the crimes of the National Socialist past which follows them through their adolescence and shapes their moral consciences as radicalized adults.

Von Trotta's concern is with contextualizing a repressed past through the optic of the personal in a move to demonstrate how its absence in the public discourse of the 1950s might be read as having informed the terrorist aberration and the political crisis of the 'German Autumn'. Echoing historical overviews of the period, in interview von Trotta characterized the 1950s as a decade in which the German people 'were quick to push aside guilt and responsibility'³⁵ in favour of embracing Western capitalist values, which allowed for rapid economic growth and re-stability. This situation is played out in one of the flashbacks in which Juliane reacts strongly to the

choice of literature at her school. When asked to read the poetry of Rilke, Juliane refuses, asserting that she would prefer to read the ballad of the Jewish whore by Brecht. Her disruptive remark sees her excluded from the classroom by her teacher who is thus portrayed as complicit with the generation of historical amnesia in the public sphere during the 1950s. What had been termed the German *Unfähigkeit zu trauern* also recurs in a similar scene in Fassbinder's solo comment on terrorism. *Die Dritte Generation* (1979). Here the character of Hilde Krieger is giving a history lesson on the revolution of 1848 and bourgeois values. When a student suggests that the same bourgeois values of 1848 led to the Third Reich, and continue to hold water today, Krieger stubbornly insists that the development of the Third Reich does not belong in the discussion. Whereas the student recognizes the interdependency of the historical past and the present, the teacher would have the page torn out of the book.

Contrary to the 1950s' social ethos of *Arbeiten zu verdrängen* that appeared to have resurfaced with regard to urban terrorism in the 1970s, von Trotta's filmic text represents a space of active resistance against historical suppression and amnesia, a space in which the repressed might be made voluble. In the eyes of von Trotta, by working through her own past 'Juliane leistet Trauerarbeit, so wie eigentlich ein ganzes Land Trauerarbeit hätte leisten müssen, wozu das deutsche Volk nach 45 nicht fähig war'.³⁶ Central to this process is Juliane's invocation of her and Marianne's shared childhood and their relationship to the Reverend Klein, their father. Gudrun Ensslin's father, Helmut, was a minister of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and a staunch upholder of the Protestantism that the church advocated. Formed in 1945 following Hitler's downfall, the origins of the EKD lay in the 'Confessing

³⁵ Cited in Lisa DICAPRIO'S, 'Marianne and Julianne/The German Sisters: Baader-Meinhof Fictionalised', in Terri Ginsberg and Kirsten Moana Thompson (eds.), *Perspectives on German Cinema* (Macmillan Press: New York, 1996), pp. 391-402 (392).

³⁶ Cited in COHN-BENDIT, 'Verdrängen oder verarbeiten'.

Church', which stressed the examination of conscience. The fictional father in *Die bleierne Zeit* retains the characteristics of his real-life counterpart, imposing the rigors of Protestant ethics upon his daughters and providing uncompromising morality and a burdensome guilt which will shape Marianne's political terrorism.

Interestingly then, in the case of Marianne and Juliane, the Reverend Klein's insistence on confessing past sin would seem to stand at odds with historical agreement on the near total reach of structural amnesia during the 1950s which served to cast a protective shroud over the uncomfortable implications of the Nazi past for the war generation. Nonetheless, the version of the past that he presents to his daughters is far from unproblematic. Adopting the other extreme, the reverend burdens his young flock with an unmanageable, zealous guilt for crimes in which they were not complicit. Throughout the film the reverend Klein is associated with the colour red, the only hue to rupture the somber palette which otherwise dominates the film; after Juliane collapses at the sight of Marianne's dead body, she dreams of her father, perceiving him to be surrounded by the red glow of hellfire in their hallway as he preaches repentance from an elevated pulpit.

The father's obsessive insistence on expiation over repression elevates the trauma of Nazism to the focal point of the Klein family home: the confession of (Germany's) past sin and guilt are captured in a single image, that of Grünewald's particularly gruesome depiction of the crucifixion which takes pride of place at the top of the staircase. The image of the dying Christ possesses a dialectical historical resonance for it at once speaks for all who have suffered unjustly, whether the Jews at the hands of Hitler or the Vietnamese victims of American napalm bombing during the 1960s, whose plight also formed a central rallying point for radical students and the RAF alike. The vivid red of the blood of Christ jumps from its frame as the

antithesis of the blue/grey tonalities that reflect the changelessness of history in light of historical amnesia. The painting serves as but one in a series of horrific images which compels identification with figures of victimhood within the sisters.

The motif of identification with the victims of the Nazi regime is continued through the films that the sisters see. In the 1950s their father screens Alain Resnais' seminal Holocaust documentary, *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1955), at their school, with von Trotta's choice of excerpts showing the mounds of corpses at a Nazi extermination camp, as well as Nazi denials of guilt. Much of Resnais' footage is projected over the heads of the sisters and their classmates, thus aligning von Trotta's spectators with the girls' moral outrage at the images of Nazi horrors in a subjective shot. The extreme psychological effect these images have upon the sisters manifests itself physically; Marianne leaves the room and although the seemingly more cynical Juliane rolls her eyes at her sister's reaction, immediately after the cut the camera finds them both being physically sick in the toilets. It is interesting that the father enlists, as it were, the help of a non-national in his attempt to make German society confront the terror of its own past; Resnais also provided the voice-over to his film and it is telling that in order to expiate the guilt of Nazi atrocities it seemingly takes a foreigner to speak the words that the Germans cannot.

Die bleierne Zeit presents an allegorical composite of a generation's experience, whereby the atrocities of the National Socialist past are not processed, but either omitted or recalled as a monstrous and seemingly unmanageable moral rupture which, far from proving cathartic, becomes an unhealthily grotesque trauma which those shaped in the 1950s cannot hope to understand, let alone come to terms with. In the case of Marianne and Juliane, the father is not 'absent', that is to say he neither appears to have been compromised by the crimes of the Nazi past nor does he seek to

repress that past, but he is nonetheless integral, even if unwittingly, to reinforcing the stigmatizing weight of history. As a father, the reverend Klein might be 'an oppressive presence, unresponsive, denying and remote', as Elsaesser suggests, but still Marianne's turn to terror would seem less a direct oedipal challenge to the patriarch of the family than a fatal rebellion against a traumatic past which he indirectly symbolizes.³⁷

The effect of the sisters' unique family life is a rebellious sense of otherness and moral outrage within the girls (with Marianne taking longer to strike out than her sister) who are compelled to identify with the victims of historical processes. In a seminal exchange during another flashback, the now teenage Marianne tells her sister in their shared bedroom that she wishes to travel and carry out charity work on behalf of the victims of famine and war in Africa, stating, 'Ich möchte zu etwas nutze sein. Ich möchte gebraucht werden', to which the intensely cynical Juliane replies: 'Gebraucht werden bedeutet freiwillige Knechtschaft'. The sisters' comments here provide the fulcrum for Skidmore's reading of the text and his own bid to explain Marianne's motivation to commit violent acts, which, he claims, comes down to a distinction between 'intellectualism and emotionalism':

Juliane's bitter denigration of Marianne's idealistic desire to work in Africa demonstrates her grounding in a more realistic, and pessimistic, tradition regarding social change. Marianne expresses hope that she can make a difference; Juliane, on the other hand, has adopted the acerbic realism of an intellectual who is not about to be moved by emotional yet nonrational motivations for acting.³⁸

In Skidmore's view, 'Juliane's action is based on her independent intellectual formation, whereas Marianne's action is more visceral in nature.'³⁹ Nonetheless,

³⁷ ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema*, p. 263.

³⁸ SKIDMORE, 'Intellectualism and Emotionalism', p. 559.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 563.

Skidmore is reticent to locate the psychological scar of the Nazi past as the radicalizing trigger that her ‘emotional hyperactivity’⁴⁰ turns to terror, suggesting that it might be the motivational cause, ‘if any,’ but ultimately dismissing it.⁴¹ But by reading Marianne as essentially unthinking, Skidmore in fact strays dangerously close to reproducing the image of the terrorist shared by the capitalist imagination as somehow hysterical or pathologically unstable.

However, if we combine Skidmore’s views with the contention explored here that the horrors of the largely repressed past form the source for Marianne’s action, his reading does, however, prove useful in clearing up a common misreading of the relationship between the fascism the contemporary terror of the RAF in the film. Early in the film Juliane is heard dictating source material for an article concerning the apparent complicity of women with Nazi ideology. In her sister’s eyes, Marianne, like the women of the Third Reich, is serving the wrong political cause and so contributing to the oppression of modern women by ruining the work of peaceful female activists. In a heated attack on her sister’s ideological values during one of her prison visits, Juliane claims that, had Marianne been born a generation earlier, she would more than likely have been a member of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM).

This is the only link between contemporary terrorism and the National Socialist past in the film which Delorme acknowledges. Worse, she claims, is that this link serves to reproduce the establishment’s view that the terrorists were the true successors of fascism. Drawing on the paradigm espoused in Becker’s aforementioned, reactionary text *Hitler’s Children* – which Kaes maintains ‘mistakes the true motive of the terrorists, who had “Antifascism” inscribed on their red flags’⁴² – Delorme is adamant that *Die bleierne Zeit* mimics the view that, in the example of

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 564.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 563.

the RAF, 'right = left.'⁴³ But recalling the girls' earlier conversation in the bedroom, and drawing on Skidmore's example, we can see the extent to which Juliane's remark has been taken out of context by Delorme. Juliane does not presume to expose an underlying fascism to her sister's activism, but rather admonishes what she perceives as a lack of intellectual foundation to her actions. As Skidmore suggests: 'It is this lack of intellectual equipment, and the fact that it leaves Marianne open to manipulation by more domineering figures, that Juliane is implicitly criticizing', when she evokes the BDM.⁴⁴ Juliane is attacking Marianne's terrorism as the fatal outcome of her blind idealism, her desire 'gebraucht [zu] werden.'

The final trigger for Marianne's radicalization is implied in the final flashback, in which the sisters, now university students, watch a documentary about the victims of American napalm bombings in North Vietnam (the mainstay of APO protests) in 1968. Identification with the victims is again the overriding image, paralleling the footage of the extermination camps in Resnais' *Nuit et brouillard*, and this time Marianne declares 'Ich werde mich nie damit abfinden, daß man nichts gegen tut'. Shortly after speaking these words Marianne joins the underground, not to be seen again by her family until she meets Juliane in the museum yard shortly before her imprisonment and death.

As such, Seiter's complaint that we have no information to explain Marianne's turn to terror is untrue. Although only Marianne turns to terror, both sisters are radicalised by the monstrous guilt of the Nazi past that is handed down to them as an unwanted burden by the war generation. For the majority of von Trotta's generation,

⁴² KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p. 25.

⁴³ DELORME, 'On the Film *Marianne and Juliane*', p. 48. It is interesting to note that, while E. Ann Kaplan is quietly sceptical of Delorme's reading: '(though the film only alludes once to a possible connection between Nazism and terrorism)', her comment also exposes her blind spot to the connection between the horrors of the Nazi past and the misjudged compensatory terrorism of the postwar generation. See KAPLAN, 'Discourses of Terrorism', p. 62.

the past may have been repressed yet the horror it instigates is highly pervasive. Recalling Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject from her study *Powers of Horror* (1982), the past, for both Marianne and Juliane, is an uncanny phobia. When the sisters meet, the skin that forms on their coffee catapults them back to their childhood, reminding them of the many occasions during which their hot milk formed a skin while their father relayed his fire and brimstone sermons about sin at the family table. The past atrocities of the National Socialist regime, that is the abjection of Nazi crimes, does not respect borders but follows the sisters from childhood to adulthood, as an unmanageable and horrific force compelling rebellion.⁴⁵ Indeed, *Die bleierne Zeit* would seem to promote the view that, to cite Varon, 'West German terrorism was a tortured form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – a symptom of Germany's difficulty in working through its Nazi past,'⁴⁶ or as Paul Coates succinctly puts, it 'a cry in the echo chamber of the Nazi past'.⁴⁷

Indeed, writing about the persistence of expressionism in modern film, Coates examines *Die bleierne Zeit* through the optic of the uncanny and monstrous and posits the following notion:

The German Sisters further suggests that the inability to mourn gives birth to the vampire [...] which takes revenge upon society for the oblivion visited upon him or her. The vampire becomes the destructive representative of the dead whose burial and mourning is prevented by the self's refusal to admit the fact of death.⁴⁸

This brief yet interesting supposition is not taken any further by Coates, but it would seem to be clear that by not acknowledging its demons, German society can be read as having invited the vampire over the threshold in the form of the RAF. Just as the

⁴⁴ SKIDMORE, 'Intellectualism and Emotionalism', p. 560.

⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion of the abject in *Die bleierne Zeit* see COATES, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, pp. 210-213.

⁴⁶ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 15.

⁴⁷ COATES, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, p. 193.

appearance of the monster in horror films is, as Robin Wood suggests, symbolic of the return of the repressed, the emergence of the West German terrorist becomes symbolic of the repressed trauma of the Nazi past.⁴⁹ If the vampire is, as Ken Gelder suggests, 'more of a symptom than a cause,' then the violence of urban terror in West Germany might be seen as a symptom of the war generation's failure to come to terms with its history on behalf of a younger, untainted but nonetheless stigmatized generation. Taking Coates one step further, then, the terrorists may be viewed as metaphorical 'vampires' who take revenge for the "oblivion" visited upon them; by failing to deal with the Nazi past the burden of the war generation's history spilled over to its children, removing their potential to find their own place in the world. Accordingly, the post-war generation of terrorists become the representatives of the dead victims of fascism, whose fate has otherwise been neglected by society, thus giving a voice to the restless victims of National Socialism, and, in a modern context, the victims of the alleged 'fascist' West German state in Vietnam.

The failure of the war generation to come to terms with its past (victims) allows the ghosts of history to rise from the grave. The bite of the vampire transmits thousands of years of history to its victim, history that wishes to continue and so drives its host out of the underground through the relentless need to revisit the living. The terrorists, therefore, also share the ambiguous function of vampires. That is, as Gelder postulates, 'the vampires, although they are supposed to bring about death, thus also have an animating function.'⁵⁰ The activities of the RAF sought to reanimate the crimes of Germany's fascist legacy, but ultimately the group's violent excess sabotaged its own aim by granting the state an internal enemy, the denunciation of

⁴⁸ COATES, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, pp. 208-09.

⁴⁹ See Robin WOOD, 'An Introduction to the American Horror Film,' in Bill Nichols (ed.), *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*, vol. 2 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985).

⁵⁰ Ken GELDER, *Reading the Vampire* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 45-46.

which lessened the terrorists' insistence over that which had been repressed. Nonetheless, the only way to end history's curse is to admit the fact of death, to atone for the victims of the past and thus allow history to be laid to rest. As we shall now consider in the final section of this chapter, von Trotta's film goes some way to enacting such a resolution.

Breaking the silence and the utopian potential of the child

Working through the Nazi past is a central tenet of Juliane's labour of contemporary *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, with the flashbacks anchored around her present inquiry into Marianne's life of terror and death in a state prison. This process is already ongoing when we join the narrative: the film's opening shot locates Juliane (who is now acting as legal guardian to her recently orphaned nephew, Jan) in her study, the shelves of which are lined with binder after binder containing the arduous results of her investigation into Marianne's alleged suicide. Juliane is deep in thought as she paces the confined space, before observing a black-and-white photograph of her sister – the first in a series of triggers which propel the narrative back in time.

Juliane does, however, also work on the relationship to her estranged sister directly; through their meetings in prison following Marianne's arrest, the sisters quarrel, but also begin a gradual process of psychological bonding. This process would seem to be fostered, at least in part, by the punitive treatment of Marianne and, to a lesser extent, Juliane at the hands of the authorities. Marianne is kept in solitary confinement with, she claims, the lights left on day and night and is force-fed by the prison doctors in a disturbing scene after she has gone on hunger strike. Such depictions parallel public events, the likes of which Erhard and Rau claim the film ignores altogether. But far from confirming the official discourse on terrorism, the scenes of Marianne's imprisonment reinforce the widespread criticism that the state's

punitive handling of the RAF prisoners had generated.⁵¹ As a 'Täter-Schwester,' Juliane is subjected to thorough body searches before being led to Marianne through gated corridor after gated corridor which the matron meticulously locks behind them, and even at home she is subject to officious, around the clock police surveillance.

This serves to elicit a new bond of identification in the women which is reinforced visually the last time they meet. Indeed, the more they are separated physically, the closer psychologically the sisters become. By the time of the final visit a Perspex screen separates the women, and Juliane complains that she can hardly see her sister through the glare of the light. The spectator, however, is privy to a different view; the reflection of Juliane's face is superimposed over the image of her sister so that we see 'the merging rather than the dissolving (*verschwimmen*) that Juliane anxiously perceives,' to cite Silberman.⁵² Far from condemning Marianne/Gudrun, as Delorme had feared, this process of bonding serves to recover her as part of a relationship other than just to terror.

The final way in which the sisters truly bond is through Juliane's willingness to accept Jan. When the boy's father, Werner, committed suicide, Marianne had tried to push her son onto Juliane who wanted no part in picking up the broken pieces of her sister's life. However, by the end of the film she accepts the charge of family commitment and promises to care for the boy after someone sets his play-den on fire while he is inside. The red flames that consume the innocent child recall the glow of hellfire that Juliane perceives surrounding his grandfather, suggesting the need to properly come to terms with contemporary terror lest it threaten subsequent generations, consuming them in an unbroken cycle of historically motivated violence.

⁵¹ Adding to this criticism of state practices, Walter Uka comments that 'Im Begleittext zum Drehbuch [des Film, CH] wird ein Beitrag aus dem *Kursbuch* 32 von 1973 von Sjef Tenus zur "Isolationsfolter durch sensorische Deprivation" kommentarlos abgedruckt, um zu dokumentieren, dass jene Praxis bis in die Gegenwart hineinreicht.'; UKA, 'Terrorismus im Film', p. 392.

Indeed, as Silberman remarks, in the attack on Jan we see ‘the officially provoked and sanctioned hysteria toward terrorism in West Germany [...] visited upon the innocent, victimized child.’⁵³ Targeted because his mother threw bombs, the burnt child becomes a symptom of unresolved cycles of violence, an association strengthened through further through the continuity that the assault on Jan evokes with the furthest reaching flashback in the film where Marianne and Juliane are seen as small children, huddled against their mother in an air raid shelter as bombs fall in the closing months of the war, the innocent victims of the sins of the fathers.

In his study of German film, Coates draws his readers’ attention to ‘silence’ as a rhyme for ‘violence’ to suggest that ‘terrorist violence is in a sense born of the fear that sanctioned speech is really silence, and only action truly speaks.’⁵⁴ As we have suggested, the terrorists can be read as having sought to explode historical repression through their violent actions. But in a new distortion, sanctioned speech surrounding the discourse on terrorism now sees reactionary violence brought against yet another new generation which is made to suffer for the violent sins of its parents, sins for which it possesses no culpability. Juliane’s need to remember in order to mourn becomes thus an attempt to break contemporary silence, and so a cycle of historically motivated violence which otherwise shows little prospect of being broken. As such, *Die bleierne Zeit* both deals with and enacts an effort to break through repression, or as Coates proposes, ‘to break the silence – to speak the word that will end German history’s curse.’⁵⁵

Juliane’s efforts to break the silence surrounding her sister’s life entails personal sacrifice, becoming a process destroys her ten-year relationship to partner

⁵² SILBERMAN, *German Cinema*, p. 208.

⁵³ SILBERMAN, *German Cinema*, p. 211.

⁵⁴ COATES, *The Gorgon’s Gaze*, pp. 193-94.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

Wolfgang who cannot understand her obsession: 'Man wird dir nie glauben. [...] Wir haben noch unser Leben. [...] Leben! Ein Leben mit Leichen. Du zerstörst dich und verlangst von mir, dir dabei zu zusehen.' Lisa Dicaprio suggests that, from a feminist stance, Juliane's relationship with her boyfriend is a positive one, but within a framework of moral responsibility, of breaking the silence which surrounds history, his resignation is a form of 'complicity with evil' and his statement that 'nobody will believe you' can also be read as meaning 'nobody can grasp the Holocaust'.⁵⁶ Wolfgang's complicity with patterns of historical repression is paralleled in the public sphere. When Juliane feels that she has enough evidence to conclude her story and take it to the press she is told by the newsroom editor that the story is 'Schnee vom vorletzten Jahr', again evoking the metaphor of the freezing of history expounded by Assmann and evoked by Gabi Teichert's relentless digging for history in the frozen landscapes featured in *Deutschland im Herbst*. As far as society at large is concerned there is no longer any interest in a failed terrorist organization, the story of which has already been told by dominant discourse. Recalling this filmmaking collective's other metaphor, the express train of time has already moved on in the film's narrative. As such, Juliane has to find another structure within which she can break the silence in the hope of completing the *Trauerarbeit* necessary to draw the unresolved cycle of violence to a close. This search leads her back to the family and Jan whose anger at his mother would, initially at least, suggest an even less willing audience than Wolfgang. Thus in the context of the diegesis, passing the narrative on to Jan does 'underscore a shift to family commitment', but not 'in place of a political one' as Byg infers.⁵⁷

In her study of the transmission of memories within families, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch stresses the importance of

⁵⁶ DICAPRIO, 'Marianne and Julianne', in *Perspectives on German Cinema*, pp. 398-99.

⁵⁷ BYG, p. 263.

photography which, she proposes, ‘immobilizes the flow of family life into a series of snapshots’ and thus ‘perpetuates family myths while seeming merely to record actual moments in family history.’⁵⁸ According to Hirsch, the family acts as the ‘intersection of private and public history’, so that the family myths perpetuated by photographs become an important measure of the effects of historical events upon individuals and of their transmission through the generations.⁵⁹ In view of Hirsch’s comments, the black and white photograph of Marianne mentioned previously takes on a potent significance. Interestingly, however, this photograph perhaps speaks less about family myths than a cultural myth because, as Skidmore perceptively reveals, ‘it is the same picture that appears in the television report of Marianne’s death – one can assume that it is a police photograph.’⁶⁰ As such, it stands as a photographic encapsulation of the dominant cultural image of the monstrous terrorist. Angry and confused, Jan – who shares this cultural perception – brings violence against the image of his mother, ripping the photograph to pieces in retaliation for the violence that she brought upon him indirectly through her acts of terror. But at this juncture Juliane steps in, telling Jan that his mother was a great person and promising to tell him the story that she could not articulate in the public sphere, to which Jan demands ‘Fang an!’, clamouring to know ‘Alles! Ich muß aber alles wissen.’ Piecing the photograph back together, Juliane answers her nephew’s call for memory, and begins telling the alternative narrative that the media had shown no interest in. In this photographic record of Marianne private and public history indeed intersect, with Juliane seeking to counterbalancing the public image of the pathological terrorist with the missing personal record, and so create a new, more balanced picture.

⁵⁸ Marianne HIRSCH, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁰ SKIDMORE, ‘Intellectualism and Emotionalism’, p. 557.

Writing about *Deutschland im Herbst*, Alter pauses to consider the role of the child in shaping a future beyond the terrorism of the 'German Autumn.' Focusing on a boy seen by the grave of the Stammheim dead whom she takes to be the son of Gudrun Ensslin, Felix, she states that:

The camera lingers on his face begging the question of what his future will be. In a seemingly unmotivated slice, right before the funeral scene, a print is inserted of Leonardo da Vinci's image of the child in utero, about to be born. This poignant image suggests an as yet unborn hope that lies in the future generation.

The closing scene of *Die bleierne Zeit* also leaves us to ponder the future of Felix Ensslin's fictional counterpart, Jan. Through his counter-memorial imperative, might Jan have potentially freed his family (and his country) of the cycle of attempting to end terror through terror? The child is certainly symbolic of utopian potential. With Juliane as a guide, there is hope that Jan might be able to find a future free of violence. Between them they have broken the silence, ensuring the transmission of a more balanced memory of the immediate past and its alleged historical antecedents within the family sphere, itself an important means of fostering communicative memory since Assmann's conception of it is based on the notion of generations. Furthermore, as Dicaprio proposes, Jan's demand to know everything transcends the confines of family commitment to become 'a general moral command: "Tell my generation everything!" [and] the basic imperative of von Trotta's work'.⁶¹ Although, owing to its status as an apparatus of cultural formation, *Die bleierne Zeit* cannot be considered an example of communicative memory as such, the film enacts the need for communicative transmission in the public sphere by rearticulating a fictionalized composite of excluded private and family memories, relating both to the repressed Nazi past and the

⁶¹ DICAPRIO, 'Marianne and Julianne'. p. 400

contemporary repression of the RAF, in the very public forum of the cinema. We are left to consider whether Juliane and Jan have spoken the word(s) which might end history's curse, promoting the need to heal the wounds of the past, not prematurely cauterize them.

As we move in to the second part of this study we will consider the extent of the filmmakers of the New German Cinema's success in their effort to hold on to memory in a bid to combat contemporary amnesia and repression surrounding the RAF. After an examination of the trajectory of the memory of the RAF following this generation's intervention, we will consider how a new generation of filmmakers might answer and develop, or even turn away from the concerns expressed. It is to an examination of the shifting social context for filmmakers and four important post-unification terrorism films which we now turn.

Part II
Post-Unification Terrorism Films

Chapter 4

The Cultural Memory of the RAF, and the Intervention of the German Cinema after Unification

In the first part of this study, we explored the New German Cinema's creation of counter-perspectives on the 'German Autumn' which emphasized communicative memories of the RAF fostered by individual and family memory. The creation of counter-memories was, of course, possible, but as a direct challenge to official public memory they were less successful. If communicative memories are to embed themselves in the collective consciousness then they must, at some stage, make the transition into public memory; that is to say they must be rendered visible to the group. But while *Deutschland im Herbst* and *Die bleierne Zeit* succeeded in rearticulating histories and memories that had been excluded from official collective discourse, they never really achieved this transition in a sustained manner. This might seem surprising given Elsaesser's contention that, in the example of *Deutschland im Herbst*, the film 'found such immediate success',¹ and more recently, Schlöndorff's claim that 'früher uns das Publikum die Filme aus der Hand gerissen [hat]. Bei *Deutschland im Herbst* etwa war der Kinobesuch Teil einer Demonstration. In jeder Kunst steckt ein Stück Aufklärung.'² However, in stressing the film's counter-hegemonic appeal, Schlöndorff inadvertently highlights its failure as an intended treatment for the memory atrophy that the filmmakers felt was endemic among the wider population: the film might have been snatched from the filmmakers' hands *but* arguably by the 'wrong' side of the polarized 'Wir alle'/'Sie'-opposition, or *Täter/Opfer* binary which characterized West German society. As an alternative memory of the

¹ ELSAESSER, *New German Cinema*, p. 260.

² Christiane PEITZ and Jan SCHULZ-OJALA, 'Radikale brauchen Humor' (Gespräch mit Dani Levy, Volker Schlöndorff und Hans Weingartner). *Tagesspiegel*, 7 July 2005.

'German Autumn' the film spoke chiefly to a minority grouping already sensitive to the filmmaker's oppositional aims, to those cast by the state as indirect allies of that 'blindwütige Bande von Mördern', as the then opposition leader Helmut Kohl had characterised the RAF.³ In a manner of speaking, the film was preaching to those already converted. As such, the film's desire to present alternative images and perspectives could do little to puncture the common image of the very recent past through which the dominant 'Wir alle' grouping within the Federal Republic conceived of its identity and unity. Furthermore, this group was less willing to have its patience tested by *Deutschland im Herbst's* difficult avant-garde aesthetics, which arguably frustrated the film's desire to foster alternative thinking on a large scale. In this regard, Anton Kaes points suggests that,

the public resonance of *Germany in Autumn* was limited because its thematic interest in questions of memory and mourning as well as its experimental montage form contradicted most viewers' expectations for a feature film. There were no characters to identify with, no elaborate historical sets, and no engrossing story to follow.⁴

Although Kluge maintained that 'understanding a film is conceptual imperialism which colonizes its objects', and, therefore, 'if I have understood everything then something has been emptied out', the film's refusal to harmonize its images in a bid to preserve the unresolved sense of confusion surrounding the period meant that for a majority the film's 'aufklärerische' function was rendered inert.⁵ While the film offered direct memories that were not be found on German television, the univocal images of the German media with their clear cut heroes and villains and easy modes of identification might have

³ Cited in STEINSEIFER, 'Terrorismus als Medienereignis', p. 364.

⁴ Anton KAES, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1989), p.28.

⁵ KLUGE, 'On Film and the Public Sphere', p. 211.

represented 'conceptual imperialism', but they nonetheless provided a more digestible narrative for the majority of the country, which was described by author Friedrich Christian Delius as possessing a "'Rübe ab!'-Mentalität'.⁶ While the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* were able to create counter-memories which emphasized the importance of 'undesirable' communicative memories in remembering the RAF, they were ultimately unable to contest the highly selective terms of remembrance privileged by the state-sanctioned master narrative in a sustained fashion. Although the filmmakers of the New German Cinema might have succeeded in providing a pocket of resistance they remained a marginal voice of opposition that could not stop collective amnesia from developing. The express train of history thus moved on relatively unperturbed.

Indeed, following the federal government's bold declaration in the winter of 1977 that terrorism was finished with and public life could return to normal, by the 1980s it certainly appeared that the RAF had been largely forgotten by West German society. Although the re-emergence of the group in 1979 had sought to challenge its firm relegation to the past tense, the frenzied state reaction to the group's pre-'77 campaign was not repeated with the same level of intensity in response to the more sporadic acts of terror which continued until the group announced a tentative cessation of armed conflict in 1992. Indicative of the state's success in controlling the terrorist challenge to its supremacy, in many ways the RAF was already a spent force by the time of its re-emergence and so while the RAF's lifespan was artificially extended through second and third generations of urban terrorists, the group no longer posed the same 'existential' or 'supra-ideological' threat to the collective identity of the Federal Republic that its first-

⁶ Friedrich Christian DELIUS, 'Die Dialektik des deutschen Herbstes', in Friedrich Christian DELIUS, *Warum ich schon immer recht hatte und andere Irrtümer: Ein Leitfaden für deutsches Denken* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p.61. First published in *Die Zeit*, 25 July 1997.

generation cadre had embodied. The danger posed by Baader, Ensslin and their violently expressed charge of fascism against the Federal Republic had been contained and instrumentalised, redeployed against the terrorists in order to assert the democratic legitimacy of the state and so preserve its self-image and claim to unity which the terrorists had tried to explode. Despite the best efforts of the filmmakers of the New German Cinema to combat the wave of contemporary repression that threatened to engulf the memory of the RAF, the state's military and discursive victory invited forgetfulness; a line was drawn under the RAF terrorism offering a final, when premature, assessment. The meaning of the RAF had been 'decided upon', a fact which did not invite but rather preclude the perception of a need to work on this past as an unresolved trauma with far reaching historical antecedents at the filmmakers of the New German Cinema had claimed. Rather than viewing the outcome of the autumn of '77 as a traumatic injury to the postwar collective psyche, the state proffered its success in the 'German Autumn' as a cathartic suture; for the hegemonic order the chapter on urban terrorism was closed and no one needed to be affected by it any longer.

If we are to accept as true Nietzsche's oft-quoted dictum, then 'nur was nicht aufhört, weh zu tun, bleibt im Gedächtnis.'⁷ From the perspective of the federal government the sting of the 'German Autumn' had been resolved; Schleyer had been mourned, his sacrifice for the health of the collective extolled and the 'blindwütige Mörder' had been silenced. As such, from a state perspective the rapid removal of the RAF from the visual acuity of the collective psyche was only natural. But on the flip-side of the same coin, in some quarters the state's self-determined cathartic suture was

⁷ Friedrich NIETZSCHE, *Zur Genealogie der Moral Eine Streitschrift* (1887), in Giorgio COLLI andazzino MONTINARI (eds.), *Werke. Kritische Ausgabe*, 6.II, 259-431 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), p. 311.

anything but and served only to belie a lingering pain which needed more healing time and so due comment. At once pushed to the margins yet clamouring to be heard, within this tension the memory of the RAF had become ‘intermittently “invisible” history’, to borrow a phrase from Julia Hell and Johannes von Moltke.⁸ In addition to the RAF’s own attempts to resist historicisation, the group was lent intermittent visibility by cultural bearers who, in the mid-1980s, attempted to reengage the topic of urban terrorism; in 1986, during the twilight years of the New German Cinema, Reinhard Hauff’s *Stammheim*, scripted by Stefan Aust, reopened the closed casebook on the RAF, dramatising the Baader-Meinhof trial in order to pose ‘Fragen nach der gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung für politisch motivierte Gewalt und Gegengewalt’, as Prinzler maintains.⁹ Hauff’s film was recognised by the panel of Germany’s most prestigious national film award ceremony – the *Berlinale* – with a ‘Golden Bear,’ but as a testimony to the taboo status surrounding the ‘RAF-Täter’ this decision was heavily disputed. As Walter Uka notes, it was ‘nur unter heftigen Protesten’ that Hauff could claim his prize.¹⁰ In the same year Markus Imhoof released a filmic adaptation of *Die Reise*, the novel by Gudrun Ensslin’s former husband Bernward Vesper, which, for Sabine Hake, participated ‘in the labour of mourning that connected the ‘German Autumn’ to the unresolved legacies of the Third Reich and the failed utopias of the student movement.’¹¹

By the close of the decade it was not the RAF on celluloid but rather on canvas which threatened to be the most provocative reawakening of the very recent past. In 1989

⁸ Julia HELL and Johannes VON MOLTKE, ‘Unification Effects: Imaginary Landscapes of the Berlin Republic’, in Julia HELL and VON MOLTKE (eds.), *The Cultural Logics of the Berlin Republic*, special issue of *The Germanic Review*, 80:1 (2005-06), pp. 74-95 (77).

⁹ Cited in UKA, ‘Terrorismus im Film’, p. 393.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*

¹¹ HAKE, *German National Cinema*, p. 168.

Gerhard Richter's *Oktober 18, 1977*, the so-called *RAF Zyklus* of paintings, was exhibited in Krefeld. Richter's portraits of Baader, Ensslin and Meinhof and the burial for the Stammheim dead saw familiar *Täter*-images proliferated by the media rendered abstract by the artist's technique of 'feathering the edges of his forms or dragging his brush across the wet, gray pigment-loaded surface of the canvas so that shapes and spaces elide', to quote the art historian Robert Storr.¹² In the example of Richter's work apparently self-contained medial images became blurry portraits requiring viewers, in a strategy reminiscent of *Deutschland im Herbst*, to readily adjust their position, constantly shifting back and forth in a largely vain attempt to bring the picture in to perspective. As Hell and von Moltke remark in their interpretation of the paintings, 'generating a tension between photographic realism and its negation, *Oktober 18, 1977* raises the question of what can be seen and represented and what cannot, while implicating the viewer in the visual production of historical memory.'¹³ Richter's critical re-rendering of a past which the authorities would rather remained closed, and namely from the perspective of the *Täter*, possessed an overt inflammatory potential. Indeed, remaining with Hell and von Moltke for a brief moment longer, by 'touching on one of the Federal Republic's most sensitive taboos, the exhibit promised to become the political scandal of the year', but then, as they go on to comment, 'it did not; instead the Berlin Wall came down.'¹⁴

German reunification and the subsequent collapse of communism dealt an irrevocable blow to the identity of the RAF eroding, as it did, former ideological allies and opponents. The initial euphoria over the fall of the Berlin Wall similarly

¹² Robert STORR, *Gerhard Richter. Oktober 18, 1977* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2000), p. 28. See also for a very detailed analysis of Richter's so-called *RAF Zyklus* of paintings.

¹³ HELL and VON MOLTKE. 'Unification Effects', p. 77.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

overshadowed one of the RAF's last high-profile 'assassinations' when, on November 11 1989, third-generation members of the group exploded the car that was driving Alfred Herrhausen, Spokesperson for the Deutsche Bank, to his offices in the financial district of Frankfurt. Then in 1991, the group assassinated Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, the head of the *Treuhandanstalt* responsible for the privatizing the assets of the former GDR, the flawed socialist project of which the RAF had venerated as ideological alternative to the capitalism of the west. The beginning of the end, the RAF's tentative ceasefire¹⁵ trailed this final execution by less than a year, but even though the group would not formally disband until the spring of 1998, for scholars such as Varon it was already clear by this early stage that the RAF had 'outlived its political relevance.'¹⁶

The twentieth anniversary of the 'German Autumn' and *Todesspiel*

In 1997 the 'new' Federal Republic witnessed the twentieth anniversary of the greatest political crisis that its predecessor, the 'old' Federal Republic had faced. The participants and events of the 'German Autumn', which had tested the democratic will of the Bonn Republic – the name also ascribed to the 'old' Federal Republic – were replayed across the pages of newspaper editorials and television discussion panels, magazine covers and retrospectives in an out-and-out explosion of media intrigue. Initially, this intense, renewed visibility of the terrorist past would seem to stand at odds with our discussion above, but a closer inspection reveals that the medial reconstruction of the past in 1997, somewhat paradoxically, was invested in securing the RAF's invisibility by playing a part in securing the sense of finality surrounding the group in which the production of cultural memory had been invested since 1977.

¹⁵ 'tentative' because the following year the terrorists bombed the construction site for a new prison in Weiterstadt, an operation which incurred no human casualties.

¹⁶ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 11.

Commenting on the anniversary, Wolfgang Kraushaar wrote ‘1977 gab es die “Offensive ’77”, zwanzig Jahre später haben wir die Medienoffensive 1997 erlebt.’ For Kraushaar the commemorative impulse of ’97 was less about the RAF per se, than an oftentimes macabre media event interested in selling newspapers and dominating the share of television viewing figures:

Kein Fernsehkanal, keine Illustrierte, kein Magazin, keine Zeitung, die darauf verzichten wollte, durch die schaurig-voyeuristische Redramatisierung der Schleyer-Entführung Aufmerksamkeit zu gewinnen [...] Früher hat der Staat die RAF gebraucht, um sich und seinen Apparat an ihr beweisen zu können. Heute scheinen die Massenmedien die Negativaura der RAF zu benötigen, um sich in Szene setzen zu können.¹⁷

For Kraushaar, the terrorist past was re-summoned in a form akin to an ornamental broadcast commodity in which the Schleyer kidnapping, a signature image of the ‘German Autumn’, was now being replayed across the electronic media for its thriller, and so of course, ratings potential. However, the return of the RAF as a media event also suggests that the ‘new’ Federal Republic still required the ‘Negativaura’ of the RAF in precisely the manner outlined by Kraushaar above. While the unified German state might not have been required to prove its own worth through the negative integration of the RAF per se, as the direct beneficiary of the democratic values of the Bonn Republic which had come under fire not just from the terrorist challenge to its political legitimacy but concerned commentators (both domestic and international), it was in the interests of the ‘new’ republic to venerate, even exonerate, the image of its pre-self, the principles of which formed the bedrock of its current identity a progressive exponent of the rule of law. In this regard, the ritualistic significance of the ‘German Autumn’ as an anchor for

¹⁷ Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000), p. 163.

the state's cultural formation of memory, which was invested in preserving its self-image through the negative integration of the terrorists 'als direkte Bedrohung eines umfassenden "Wir"', to cite Steinseifer, was invoked once more.¹⁸ In politically motivated displays of *Westalgie* the hard-line stance of the Bonn Republic's key-players was vindicated in support of the state promulgated myth of unwavering solidarity against its monstrous, internal 'other'. As Theweleit observed during the anniversary:

noch heute feiern (im TV-Rückblicken) die Bonner Akteure ihre parteiübergreifenden Umarmungen, mit der Nachricht der geglückten Befreiung der Landshut in Mogadischu im Ohr: Wischnewski in den Armen von CSU-Zimmerman, Schmidt und Strauß als Co-Dompteure des Großen Krisenstabs, überparteiliche Tränen zur Rettung der Republik.¹⁹

The constant replaying of the celebratory images and qualitative rulings by the self-styled 'saviours of the republic' which had accompanied the Bonn Republic's discursive and military victory in 1977 – a victory which, as we saw in Chapter 1, served as an oath of sorts, or 'mythische Urgeschichte' for the triumphant continuation of the socio-political values the terrorists had tried to explode²⁰ – saw the importance of the 'German Autumn' as a 'fixed point' in the production of cultural memory rehearsed, renewed and strengthened in order to remind the collective of its desired symbolic coding.

Striving for its share of the anniversary ratings, the television station *ARD* screened the five-part documentary *Im Fadenkreuz – Deutschland und die RAF* as well as the small screen director Heinrich Breloer's two part television-film *Todesspiel*, considered to be *the* media event of the anniversary.²¹ Breloer's quasi-documentary, which replays the RAF's failed 'Offensive '77', is consistent with the numerous other anniversary-

¹⁸ STEINSEIFER, 'Terrorismus als Medienereignis', p. 379

¹⁹ THEWELEIT, *Ghosts*, pp. 72-74.

²⁰ ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 56.

²¹ For a detailed discussion of *Todesspiel*, see ELSAESSER, *Terror und Trauma*, pp. 53-60.

motivated medial interventions which are happy to ape the specified terms of cultural remembrance: described by Walter Uka as a 'Stück, das keine Fragen mehr stellt', *Todesspiel* is a self-contained act which serves only to consolidate the 'Wir alle/Sie', or *Täter/Opfer* binary of the politically turbulent 1970s which stands as perhaps *the* fundamental precept of the state's regulation of identity within the cultural memory of the urban terrorism.²² Although Breloer's mixture of fiction and reality, dramatization and documentary (including an interview with former chancellor Helmut Schmidt) allowed room for the perspective of RAF, the terrorists were depicted in the terms set out by the state; consistent with established cultural coding they emerge as brutish, murderous malcontents with little or no claim to political legitimacy. In contrast, Schmidt is granted a modern forum in which he can again reiterate the commitment to democracy that informed his government's hard-line stance during the crisis and expiate what would seem to be a lingering sense of guilt over Schleyer's death. As Elsaesser surmises, 'bemühte sich *Todesspiel* stark um die Ermöglichung einer besonderen Identifikation mit Ex-Kanzler Schmidt.'²³

By the time of the *Todesspiel's* release, the New German Cinema had long since become a thing of the past itself. Given the oppositional mandate which had informed the New German Cinema's critical engagement with the topic 'RAF' it is with no loss of irony that, rather than positing their texts as an opportunity to reopen a line of dialogue on the terrorist past that might lead to a renewed process of critical engagement, German filmmakers were now apparently supporting the status quo. In the view of the scholar Eric Rentschler in particular, this turn of events was viewed as a source of intense

²² UKA, 'Terrorismus im Film', p. 395.

²³ ELSAESSER, *Terror und Trauma*, p. 57.

concern. For him the post-wall cinema is largely 'divested of the topical impetus and utopian resolve which once energized' the New German Cinema, emerging instead 'as an emanation of an overdetermined German desire for normalcy as well as a marked disinclination towards any serious political reflection or sustained historical retrospection'. Termed by Rentschler as 'the Cinema of Consensus', post-unification German filmmaking, he avers, 'is devoid of substance, conviction and deeper meaning.'²⁴

Above all, Breloer's television-film is certainly 'consensual.' While not divest of topicality, the film fails to bare critical teeth and is instead content to mirror the hegemony's cultural terms of remembrance surrounding the RAF; sustained political reflection gives way to the parading of clichéd images which imprison the past yet offer an affirmative glance through which the dominant order can assure itself, and the rest of its group, of its own identity. As such, the quasi-documentary form of *Todesspiel* is consistent with terms laid out elsewhere by Kaes, becoming one of many 'films in the past tense', the "'authentic" reconstructions' of which show 'the past as finished and done with'.²⁵ Indeed, Landgraeber, referring to the example of Breloer's film and the wider media circus that accompanied '97, remarked laconically: 'Damit dürfte die Geschichte des Terrorismus im Nachkriegsdeutschland *dann endgültig politisch korrekt abgewickelt sein.*'²⁶ And as Stefan Reinecke added in a retrospective 2001 article: '1997, zum 20-Jährigen Dienstjubiläum, glaubten viele, dass Breloers TV-Faction *Todesspiel*

²⁴ Eric RENTSCHLER, 'From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus', in Mette HJORT and Scott MACKENZIE (eds.), *Cinema and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 260-277 (260).

²⁵ Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat*, p. 23. Kaes' original example is the 'Hitler wave' of films in the 1970s which repackaged the Nazi past as a series of clichéd images representing 'entertainment – gripping but harmless', and thus allowing them to be absorbed by the collective without the need to dwell on the implications of this particular past. See *ibid.*

²⁶ LANDGRAEBER, 'Das Thema "Terrorismus" in deutschen Spielfilmen', p. 21. (My emphasis)

das gültige, fugendichte Gesamtbild des Deutschen Herbstes wäre: *ein Schlusswort*.²⁷ This sense of finality ascribed by the aesthetic and narrative practices of media events like *Todesspiel* to the terrorist legacy underscored the end of the RAF's project, preempting the group's decision to disband the following year. But still, the dealings with the past in 1997 seemed less an attempt to come to terms with the terrorism of the RAF than an opportunity to consolidate, once and for all, the narrow *Täter/Opfer* binary. However, at a time when it looked like the cultural memory of urban terrorism had been irrevocably cast in stone, and even aided in the process by film, a shift was about to occur as a new generation of filmmakers began their rise to prominence. As Reinecke wryly adds, in spite of the apparent 'Schlusswort'-'97, 'es kam anders.'²⁸

Post-Unification filmmakers and the 'undead' history of the RAF

In the same year that a firm line was being drawn under the memory of the RAF, filmmaker Andres Veiel (b. 1959) began planning his own documentary feature *Black Box BRD*, a dual biography of the lives of a third-generation RAF-*Täter*, Wolfgang Grams, and the aforementioned RAF-*Opfer*, Alfred Herrhausen. But as the director subsequently explained in interview, his feeling that there was more work to be done on the terrorist past ran contrary to mainstream opinion:

Nachdem 1997 Breloer's *Todesspiel* herausgekommen war und die ARD dann noch einen Fünfteiler *Im Fadenkreuz der Haft* gebracht hatte, haben mir alle Leute gesagt: Bist du blöde, jetzt kommst du mit diesem alten Hut an? Es wurde dann auch nochmal, wie im *Todesspiel*, festgehalten, daß das Thema RAF 1977 entschieden und erledigt sei, und alles andere seien Nachbeben und

²⁷ Stefan REINECKE, 'Das RAF-Gespens'. *tageszeitung*, 5 September 2002.

²⁸ Ibid.

Fragestellungen, die allenfalls eine Minderheit der Minderheit noch interessierten.²⁹

Adding to this suggestion that that the topic RAF was a dead socio-political and, for many artists, aesthetic phenomenon, another emerging director, Christian Petzold (b. 1960), had encountered the same hostile reaction, but even earlier than Veiel. In an interview to accompany the eventual release of his own terrorism-film in 2001, Petzold commented, 'als ich anfing, über *Die innere Sicherheit* nachzudenken – Anfang der 90er-Jahre -, schien der Film keine Umgebung zu haben. Der Terrorismus als ästhetisches Phänomen war mausetot', adding, 'die meisten Leute kennen das [Thema RAF] ja gar nicht mehr, es ist eher vergessen, obwohl Reste, Erinnerungen überall herumliegen.'³⁰

However, for both Veiel and Petzold, these very 'Nachbeben und Fragestellungen' which purportedly 'allenfalls eine Minderheit der Minderheit noch interessierten' made clear that although the legacy of the RAF may indeed have been 'entschieden' in terms of a dominant public memory it was, in fact, far from being 'erledigt'. That which had come to be accepted as the dominant cultural myth of the RAF by no means represented the complete picture. There were still questions to be posed about the way in which the RAF was remembered. Certainly, for filmmakers such as Petzold and Veiel, any sense that the anniversary represented a new phase of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with regard the RAF legacy this was questionable. Rather, such a process had been initiated by the filmmakers of the New German Cinema, but consequently retarded by the consensual meaning surrounding terrorism which belied the

²⁹ Dorothea HAUSER and Andreas SCHROTH, 'Das Thema ist erledigt: Romuald Karmakar, Christian Petzold und Andres Veiel zum Politischen im deutschen Film', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 117 (2002) 33, pp. 44-60 (44). Here, Veiel in fact misquotes the title of Christian BERG and Cordt SCHNIBBEN's five-part television documentary *Im Fadenkreuz: Deutschland und die RAF* (1997).

³⁰ Ulrich KRIEST, 'Im Hinterland des Nihilismus: Ein Gespräch mit Christian Petzold über *Die innere Sicherheit*', *film-dienst*, 03 (2001), pp. 10-11.

unresolved nature of the group's history, thus holding it in a ghostlike stasis. Indeed, as we shall discuss further in Chapter 6, Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* deals with what I have previously termed elsewhere 'undead' history in relation to the legacy of the RAF.³¹ Over the last ten years, commentators have persistently ascribed an air of the supernatural to the ostensible 'non-memory' of the RAF, from Langraeber who draws on Wilhelm von Sternburg to term the group a 'klappriges Gespenst',³² to numerous variations on the notion of the RAF as 'haunting' the consciousness of Germany.³³ As Kraushaar eloquently puts it:

Gewiss, die RAF ist längst untergegangen und ein Teil der bundesdeutschen Geschichte geworden. Zugleich scheint aber immer noch ein Gespenst gleichen Namens durchs Land zu ziehen und für erhebliche Unruhe sorgen zu können.³⁴

The terrorism of the RAF had been assessed and consigned to history in the hope of laying it to rest. However, the memory of the group persisted both through its own attempts to resist historicisation through continued acts of terror and the oppositional energies of cultural bearers. While the legacy of the RAF remains unresolved it continues to roam. Advancing Hell and von Moltke's notion of 'intermittently "invisible" history', the 'undead' history of the RAF is present yet absent, ostensibly a non-topic yet still possesses the power to provoke, trapped in limbo until resolved. In Chapter 5 we will explore the way *Die innere Sicherheit* sees Petzold code his family of terrorists in terms of the supernatural. Although Petzold underscores the exhaustion of the terrorist ideology

³¹ See my 'The Return of "Undead" History: the West German Terrorist as Vampire and the Problem of "Normalizing" the Past in Margarethe von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit* (1981) and Christian Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* (2001)', in Stuart TABERNER and Paul COOKE (eds.) *German Culture, Politics and Literature into the Twenty-First Century: Beyond Normalization* (Camden House: Rochester, 2006), pp. 121-36.

³² Cited in LANDGRAEBER, 'Das Thema "Terrorismus" in deutschen Spielfilmen 1975-1985', p. 21.

³³ See HELL and VON MOLTKE, 'Unification Effects', p. 74.

³⁴ Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, 'Zwischen Popkultur, Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Von der Schwierigkeit, die RAF zu historisieren', in *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, online-edition 1 (2004) <<http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Kraushaar-2-2004>> [accessed on 12 January 2005].

in the Berlin Republic, he nonetheless emphasizes the relentlessness of its legacy. The film attempts to reinitiate the process of coming to terms with this past in order that it might finally be laid to rest.

The implications of ‘normalization’ for the legacy of the RAF

In his short study, *Terror und Trauma: Zur Gewalt des vergangenen in der BRD* (1997),

Thomas Elsaesser has since also evoked the notion of the history of the RAF as ‘untot’,

but for Elsaesser:

Das (periodisch immer wieder aufflackernde) Nachleben der RAF gehört in erster Linie zu der seit den 1980er Jahren stets mehr um sich greifenden, allgemeinen Gedächtnis- und Erinnerungskultur, die im Zeichen der “Aufarbeitung” des Holocaust und des Naziregimes auch der RAF (und der [...] Deutung in Bezug auf NS-Traumata) einen festen Platz in der Geschichte der BRD eingeräumt hat.³⁵

Viewing West German terrorism as an unresolved oedipal complex of sorts, for Elsaesser the history of the RAF is animated chiefly through its abnormal association *by proxy* with the National Socialist past, which has remained a constant concern of memory discourse in the humanities. But with the advent of a re-envisioned concept of the disputed term ‘normalization’ in the latter half of the 1990s, changing attitudes toward the National Socialist past might in fact have contributed to the terrorist past fading further from view, as we shall now briefly consider.

That by the end of the 1990s ‘normalization’ had become the uncontested buzzword of the decade is indeed surprising given that its inception was viewed with such suspicion, particularly by many on the left who, viewing the Holocaust as, in Dan Diner’s terms, an unparalleled ‘Zivilisationsbruch’, had imposed a moratorium on any notion of a

³⁵ Thomas ELSAESSER, *Terror und Trauma*, p. 18.

'normal' Germany.³⁶ Thus the introduction of the term in the early-1990s by the conservative Kohl administration was attributed by the left to a perceived 'desire to play down the centrality of the Nazi past in order to mitigate German guilt and instil national pride,' to quote Taberner.³⁷ Nonetheless, by the turn of the millennium Gerhard Schröder's Red-Green coalition had successfully appropriated and seemingly rehabilitated the term, promoting a view of 'normalization' that sought to reincorporate the Nazi past into the progressive, westward looking socio-political consciousness of the Berlin Republic as a grave lesson, yet importantly a lesson that had been *learnt*. This version of 'normality', termed 'latitudinal normality' by Stuart Taberner, is, he argues, reflected architecturally by the 'new' Reichstag in Berlin. In Taberner's interpretation, the addition of Norman Foster's glass cupola above the debating chamber symbolizes the openness of 'transparent democracy' advocated by the new Germany, while the nineteenth-century edifice upon which it sits preserves the scars of the Second World War, thus pointing to the country's 'obligation to remember the catastrophe of German militarism.'³⁸

However, the enthusiasm with which this version of 'normalization' was greeted in the latter half of the 1990s had further implications for the recent terrorist past. If the filmmakers of the New German Cinema were to be believed during the 1970s, not only had National Socialism *not* been dealt with, it had also set in motion a further cycle of violence, an element of which, as we considered in von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit*, was

³⁶ See Dan DINER (ed.) *Zivilisationsbruch: Denken nach Auschwitz* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1988).

³⁷ Stuart TABERNER, 'Introduction: German Literature in the Age of Globalisation,' in Stuart TABERNER (ed.), *German Literature in the Age of Globalisation* (Birmingham: Birmingham University Press, 2004), pp. 1-24 (6).

³⁸ Stuart TABERNER, *German literature of the 1990s and Beyond* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), p. xiii.

the RAF's fatal need to give a voice to the victims of the Nazi regime through its own acts of terror. But although the Red-Green coalition's adaptation of 'normalization' stresses the centrality of the Nazi past to the political identity of the new Germany, the strong desire to make amends, particularly on the international level,³⁹ might also suggest a new phase of greater ease with regard to burdensome National Socialist legacy which was fundamental to the identity of the RAF. That this shift gained prominence in the same year that the RAF disbanded is coincidental yet telling; a final strike to the group's political relevance as the state began to recognize rather than forget the victims of the Nazi past.

The apparent contradiction of a left-wing government now conceiving of the possibility for a 'normal' nation became creditable through the attempts to define another legacy, that of '68. As Taberner and Cooke note:

the form of normalization pursued by Schröder and Fischer was plausible above all on account of their biographies as former student protesters and members of the generation of '68. The successful democratization of the "old" FRG, and particularly its progress in coming to terms (albeit belatedly and never completely) with the past, the 68ers were prone to claim, was their achievement and their bequest to the Berlin Republic.'⁴⁰

In the battle to define their own legacy, the 68ers had since stressed their self-appointed success in propelling the Bonn Republic towards the need to recognize, rather than sweep under the carpet of economic progress, the traumatic schism of the Nazi past and reform the alleged residual traces of fascism rule, which they felt lurked in the oppressive institutions of capitalist rule. The terrorism of the RAF, which, as we saw in Chapter 1,

³⁹ This included resolving international disputes over the payment of reparations to Jewish and Eastern European forced labourers, or *Zwangsarbeiter*.

⁴⁰ TABERNER and COOKE. 'Introduction', p. 10.

Hoerschelmann suggested temporarily closed this debate, is played down by the 68ers as a 'blinder Fleck' on this road to reform which should not detract from the bid to cement protest movement's reputation as what Claus Leggewie terms 'eine glücklich gescheiterte Revolution.'⁴¹ 'Latitudinal normality,' can therefore be read as having served the final blow to the 'necessity', post-unification, of the RAF's acts of terror as fatal compensation for the unacknowledged horrors of Nazism and the Holocaust by advocating its strenuous political recognition.

However there are versions of 'normality' which would appear to side-step the issue of the Nazi past altogether. The supporters of what Taberner terms 'longitudinal normality' advocate the reintegration of German traditions into the present, but which are untainted by the 'hiccup' of National Socialism.⁴² Evocative of the conservative thinking which had incensed left-wing thinkers in the early 1990s, while this version of 'normality' also 'alludes to history' it is seen to cherry-pick that past for its most historically discreet vestiges. In this regard Taberner points again to the 'new' Reichstag but as open for interpretation, maintaining that the normalizing implications of the redesign might also represent this tendency, thus pointing to 'an integration of the present into a form of continuity with Germany's first "successful" constitution as a European state' which elides the horrors of the buildings Nazi history in favour of promoting German pride and self-confidence.⁴³ The RAF also fits in to this paradigm by virtue of its abnormal historical symbiosis with the Nazi legacy, the strength of which is so, that the lingering memory of the group also acts a stark reminder of the past which this conception of normalization seeks to circumvent. If 'latitudinal normality' diminished the

⁴¹ Claus LEGGEWIE, '1968 ist Geschichte', *Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 22-23 (2001), p. 5.

⁴² TABERNER, *German Literature of the 1990s*, xv.

⁴³ Ibid.

RAF's contemporary relevance, then 'longitudinal normality' speaks to the desire discussed previously to exorcise the memory of the group from the collective consciousness, suggesting that if a 'longitudinal' line was to be drawn under National Socialism, a similar line could be drawn under the memory of its symbiotic anomaly, the RAF.

As we shall see in our subsequent discussions of individual texts, although the post-unification terrorism films to be discussed in this study refute such attempts to relegate the RAF to annals of history, they do reflect the shifting socio-political climate surrounding the legacy of National Socialism. In light of the greater sense of ease afforded to this past by, if they are to be believed, the 68ers' programme of social enlightenment, post-wall filmmakers are no longer content to face the terrorist past simply as a knock-on effect of National Socialism, but also as a problem in itself that needs resolving, the spectre of which might otherwise pose problems for post-unification society. In so doing, the rediscovery of the terrorist past by recent filmmakers also reflects nearly twenty five years of a shifting social context which takes in to account the upheavals of unification and the social character of the Berlin Republic within which they operate. Central to this are the generational shifts which are taking place: the 68ers might have ascended to the seat of power by the close of the century, but their position is being increasingly challenged by younger generations vying for recognition. Of the films that will be discussed in detail, Volker Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* and Hans Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, in particular, are as much concerned with the wider legacy of '68 following unification as the aberrant terrorism which came after. Indeed, in the post-unification terrorism films that I will scrutinize in detail we find the

legacy of '68 and, for former student radicals its uncomfortable proximity to the terrorism of the RAF, reassessed in light of and, with the exception of returning 68er Volker Schlöndorff, by subsequent generations. It is to the implications of these generational shifts and the disputed legacy of '68 which we now turn.

The battle for cultural hegemony: generational shifts and the beleaguered legacy of '68

By the mid-1990s the legacy of '68 had settled around the term 'successful failure',⁴⁴ a consensual, if uneasy, dual view of the student movement as a 'short-term political failure' but with 'long-term socio-cultural effects', to quote the '68 scholar Ingo Cornils, through which 'each side could claim victory: the 68ers for conquering the imagination, the conservatives for conquering reality.'⁴⁵ The 68er movement might have failed to overturn the existing political system and is associated with drug abuse and, of course, terrorism, but its opposition to capitalist economics notwithstanding, the movement secured West Germany's orientation towards western values such as sexual liberation and increased tolerance. In a marked contrast to the state-regulated consensual meaning surrounding the RAF, however, the communicative memories of the 68ers have taken the centre role in shaping the collective understanding of '1968' as a mythic, symbolically laden moment, as 'a watershed not simply in the history of the Left but in that of the Federal Republic', to recall Burns and van der Will.⁴⁶ But in 1998, the provocation of a new government with roots in the radical past, and so the fear that the 68ers might have a belated stab at conquering political reality after all, meant that 'the battle for cultural

⁴⁴ See CORNILS, 'Successful Failure', p. 105. The dual view of the German student movement as 'Erfolgreich gescheitert' was introduced in 1988 by Wilhelm Bittorf but Cornils suggests that the term's consensual acceptance was first cemented in Matthias Kopp's film essay of the same name. See *ibid.*, and BITTORF, 'Träume im Kopf, Sturm auf den Straßen', *Der Spiegel* 14-21 (1988).

⁴⁵ CORNILS, 'Successful Failure', p. 112

⁴⁶ BURNS and VAN DER WILL, *Protest and democracy in West Germany*, p. 100.

hegemony and the exclusive right to interpret the past in the Federal Republic erupted again in full force', to cite Cornils once more.⁴⁷

But perhaps of more pertinence to our present discussion is the shock manner in which the battle over the legacy of '68 intensified in 2001 when Germany's Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer took to the stand as a witness in the murder trial of the terrorist Hans-Joachim Klein, thus reigniting the *Gewaltfrage* which scrutinised the extent of the connection between the 68er movement and terrorist violence. In 1975 Klein had worked alongside the Venezuelan terrorist Carlos (the Jackal) in an attack on OPEC ministers in which five men lost their lives. Fischer and Klein had been colleagues in the Frankfurt *Sponti-Szene* but when Klein went on to join the terrorist group *Revolutionäre Zellen*, which would ultimately lead him to Carlos, Fischer did not follow. In the run up to the trial it quickly became apparent that the media glare was not focusing on Klein, but rather on Germany's Foreign Minister whose presence began to prove especially controversial when *Stern* published photographs supplied by Ulrike Meinhof's daughter, Bettina Röhl, that showed Fischer attacking a policeman at a rally in Frankfurt in 1973. Furthermore, Fischer stood accused of supporting the RAF during this time and of having thrown, or at the very least of having instigated the throwing of, Molotov cocktails during a demonstration he co-organized to mark Meinhof's death in 1976. Fischer vehemently denied any involvement with home-made explosives but openly admitted to having attacked the policeman, categorizing it as an instance in which he had decided to stand his ground instead of running: 'Es war eine

⁴⁷ Ingo CORNILS, 'Successful Failure? The Impact of The German Student Movement on The Federal Republic of Germany', in Stuart TABERNER and Frank FINLAY (eds.), *Recasting German Identity* (Rochester: Camden House, 2002), pp. 105-22 (105).

Sekundenaktion, alles spielte sich rasend schnell ab.’⁴⁸ The incident ultimately became a failed opportunity to use this legacy to discredit the former radicals in government and settle old scores but, nonetheless, put the use of violence as a means of protest back on the political agenda and pointed to the importunity of the ‘buried’ terrorist legacy. Old questions resurfaced and, as James Skidmore suggests, ‘for the 68ers [...] the debate must have seemed like a case of *déjà vu*. Here they were arguing the same issue that often split them twenty-five years earlier: what kind of action was justifiable in the fight against a system which was, in their view, merely a disguised continuation of German fascism?’⁴⁹

In the same year that Fischer took to the stand, the former student radical Gerd Koenen’s book *Das rote Jahrzehnt* threatened to destabilize further the 68ers’ repudiation of a direct link between the student movement and the terrorism of the RAF by ignoring 1968’s given status as a watershed moment. Instead, he establishes a ‘red decade’ of violent escalation which starts with the death of Benno Ohnesorg – as *the* radicalizing moment for the students – and ends with the fatal events of the ‘German Autumn.’ In Koenen’s words: ‘die Schüsse vom 2. Juni 1967 in Westberlin und vom 18. Oktober 1977 in Stammheim markieren unzweifelhaft eine dramatischen Zyklus von Stimmungen, Losungen, Bewegungen und Aktionen die eine “politische Generation” geformt haben’.⁵⁰ This attempt at historical revisionism has gained momentum, with Cornils suggesting that the author’s conception of a ‘red decade’ has become ‘indicative of a paradigm shift in the way this historical era is now received.’⁵¹

⁴⁸ ‘Fischer spielte “zentrale Rolle” in der Sponti-Szene’, *Die Welt*, 7th January 2001.

⁴⁹ SKIDMORE, ‘Intellectualism and Emotionalism’, p. 552.

⁵⁰ KOENEN, *Das rote Jahrzehnt*, p. 9.

⁵¹ CORNILS, ‘Joined at the Hip?’ (forthcoming).

The most recent and inflammatory expression of this apparent shift was in sparked by a dispute over punctuation: the lack of a comma in the title of the small 2005 volume *Rudi Dutschke Andreas Baader und die RAF* was viewed less as anything but an innocuous omission by Klaus Meschkat who perceived a barefaced attempt to synchronize the violence of the RAF with the top rank of the SDS, and specifically the chief icon of the student movement, Rudi Dutschke: 'Das auffällig fehlende Komma im Buchtitel verrät allerdings möglicherweise schon eine klare Absicht: Rudi Dutschke soll so nahe wie möglich an Andreas Baader herangerückt werden.'⁵² The wrangling over semantics was played out in a fierce debate across the pages of *taz* which was intensified further by a somewhat unexpected source; the 68er social historian Wolfgang Kraushaar's contribution to the volume, *Rudi Dutschke und der bewaffnete Kampf*. Revising his earlier view that the RAF's 'Konzept Stadtguerilla' indeed stemmed from Dutschke but was only understood by the 68er movement's leading ideologue as a 'verwegener Entwurf', out of which 'Genossen aus dem dritten Glied, angeführt von dem APO-Anwalt Horst Mahler und der Konkret Kolumnist Ulrike Meinhof, Ernst [machten]',⁵³ Kraushaar strengthened the association, suggesting that Dutschke now appears 'derjenige zu sein, der erstmals und in aller Öffentlichkeit zur Bildung einer Stadtguerilla aufgerufen hatte.'⁵⁴

The increasingly beleaguered legacy of the 68ers' political radicalism has also come under fire from younger generations for whom, although they may have profited

⁵² Klaus MESCHKAT, 'Fantasievolle Überraschungen', *taz.de*, 1 March 2005
<<http://www.taz.de/index.php?id=archiv&dig=2005/03/01/a0237&type=98>> [accessed on 1st March 2005].

⁵³ See Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000), pp. 164-65 (my emphasis).

⁵⁴ Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, 'Rudi Dutschke und der bewaffnete Kampf', in Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, Karin WIELAND and Jan REEMSTMA, *Rudi Dutschke Andreas Baader und die RAF* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), pp. 13-50 (22).

from the long-term, liberalising effects of the radical agenda, ‘the continued contemporary influence of the 68ers may appear as a burden, or for whom the 68ers’ narrative of the *Erfolgsgeschichte* of the “old” Federal Republic [...], erases the potential significance of their biography’, to cite Taberner and Cooke.⁵⁵ Both the ‘generation of ‘89’ (which came of age in the years immediately proceeding the unification and is often viewed as comparable to the better known, American ‘Generation X’) and the older ‘generation of ‘78’ (which just missed out on, or caught the tail end of the 68er revolt) are now clamouring to be heard over the ‘die staatstragenden “Yesterday Heroes” der 68er.’⁵⁶

One cultural form that has given shape to the belated voices of the 78ers in particular is the phenomenon of *Westalgie*, which demonstrates a nostalgic longing for aspects of the ‘old’ Federal Republic. But rather than functioning as a soft veil that might allow all concerned to make peace with the radical past, the way in which West Germany is remembered here frequently represents a closing down of the political and critical perspectives of ‘’68’ by the 78ers, in an attempt to liberate themselves from its shadow. As Andrew Plowman has shown, in 78er *westalgie* literary texts, such as Matthias Politycki’s *Weiberroman* (1997), the ‘kritisches Bewußtsein’ of the 68ers and the terrorism of the RAF is now itself overshadowed by other concerns, becoming ‘a less vivid backdrop than the musical sounds of the 1970s and early 1980s to the immediate concerns of growing up in the provinces, infatuation and relationships, and of getting to

⁵⁵ TABERNER and COOKE, ‘Introduction’, p. 11.

⁵⁶ Cited in CORNILS, ‘Successful Failure?’, p. 109. This comment is taken from younger German parliamentarians and originally featured in a speech delivered in Berlin in October 1999.

grips with adult life and urban living.’⁵⁷ As Plowman goes on to add: ‘What is at stake here is a disengagement from the ideals of “1968” and, in literary terms, the displacement of the critical aesthetic, [...] by a more private absorption with “lifestyle” issues stripped of any political engagement.’⁵⁸ As we have already alluded to, this critical and aesthetic shift has also been identified in filmic terms with Rentschler’s claim of a post-unification ‘cinema of consensus’ and its ‘post-1968 panoramas’⁵⁹ which, he maintains, repeatedly,

presents characters whose primary sense of person and place is rarely an overt function of their national identity or directly impacted by Germany’s difficult past. Instead of German tales of martyrdom and suffering, the New Cinema of Consensus offers tableaux of mobile young professionals, who play with possibility and flirt with difference, living in the present and worrying about their future, juggling careers, relationships and lifestyles.⁶⁰

Thus rather than engaging with unsettling social problems, many of the younger filmmakers are viewed as creating affirmative, consumable product. For Alexander Kluge: ‘they believe in Spielberg and so on, and not at all in politics.’⁶¹ Kluge’s lament reverberates with the curriculum vitae of 78er German director, Roland Emmerich (b. 1955) who has since become a Hollywood heavy-weight best known for his sci-fi hits such as *ID4: Independence Day* (1996), *Godzilla* (1998) and *The Day After Tomorrow* (2003) which, although they gesture toward social concerns – notably ecological issues – are driven by the paroles of commercial entertainment, not enlightenment. In the apt forum of a documentary short celebrating the original cycle of *Star Wars* films, Emmerich enthusiastically recalls that, as a film student in Germany, it was not

⁵⁷ Andrew PLOWMAN, “‘Was will ich denn als Westdeutscher erzählen?’: the ‘old’ West and globalisation in recent German prose”. in Stuart TABERNER (ed.) *German Literature in the Age of Globalisation* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2004), pp. 47-66 (52).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ RENTSCHLER, ‘From New German Cinema to the post-Wall Cinema of Consensus’, p. 263.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 272.

⁶¹ Cited in ibid., p. 266.

Fassbinder or Wim Wenders provided him with aspirational models of filmmaking but George Lucas and his commercially epic trilogy of 'lifestyle' films, albeit set 'in a galaxy far, far away.'⁶²

Closer to home, however, the cluster of post-unification terrorism films released in the years immediately after the publication of Rentschler's seminal essay in 2000 stand at the vanguard of yet another shift, or perhaps more apt, recourse to topical impetus and images that interrogate German history rather than reinforce consensual views. The 78er Veiel's *Black Box BRD* considers his generation's belated entanglement in urban terrorism, and which took a central role in shaping the director's adolescence, in a bid to unsettle the enduring discursive battle lines of the cultural memory surrounding the RAF. Similarly, the 78er Petzold cuts his own critical teeth on the terrorism of the RAF and although his film *Die innere Sicherheit* points partly to the need to move from the radical past, the director adopts a critical aesthetic to scrutinize the legacy of violence which directly echoes that of the New German Cinema.

At home, Emmerich's films are chiefly consumed by the 89ers for whom political engagement would appear to have been completely replaced by the post-ideological *Spaßgesellschaft*; the 'neon kids' of the Berlin Republic, it is charged, are ruled by an addiction to amusement, to the next 'kick' manifested by the seductive paroles of consumer pop-culture and the cult of celebrity.⁶³ Returning to Plowman, for the 89ers 'the turn to 'lifestyle' is perhaps more assertive. For them the notion of 'lifestyle' is

⁶² See *The Force is With Them: the Legacy of 'Star Wars'* (no credited director, USA, 2004), available on the 'Bonus Material' disc included as part of the 2004 Fox Home Entertainment DVD release of LUCAS' *Star Wars Trilogy*.

⁶³ See Matthias POLITYCKI, 'Endlich aufgetaucht: Die 78er Generation', in *Die Farbe der Vokale* (München: Luchterhand, 1998), pp. 19-22 (19).

added in its more recent determination as consumption.’⁶⁴ In this sense the 89ers’ repudiation of the 68er past is also more aggressive. In an oft-quoted passage from Florian Illies’ *Generation Golf* (2000) – widely regarded as a manual of sorts for the 89ers – the ‘pop’-author crystallizes the intense discontent of his cohort with the ‘yesterday’s heroes of ’68’ when, bringing us full circle to the concerns discussed in Chapter 1, Illies sardonically turns the student radicals’ attack on the ‘Muff von Tausend Jahren’ back against them: ‘Also Schluß mit den Geschichten von 68, Schluß mit der Mißtrauenskultur, Schluß mit der Identität von Lebensgefühl und Politik, Schluß mit dem Muff von zwanzig alternativen Jahren. Einfach Schluß.’⁶⁵ It is therefore all the more surprising that we find nostalgia for aspects of the 68er past in certain manifestations of 89er pop-culture, namely the Baader-Meinhof generation of RAF terrorists. It is to an examination of the implications of this recent cultural trend, the so-called ‘Prada-Meinhof’ phenomenon, that we now turn.

From Baader to Prada: 89er pop-culture and the disputed ‘RAF-Ausstellung’
 From Andy Warhol styled pop-art prints of Baader and Meinhof available for sale on *e-bay.de*, to the ‘Prada-Meinhof’ range of clothing launched in 1999 which, aside from slogan t-shirts, put the faces of terrorist members and the group’s insignia (the communist five-point star with a Kalashnikov imposed over it) on garments, in the short time between the twentieth anniversary of the ‘German Autumn’ and the turn of the millennium the RAF had seemingly become the ‘pop’-driven 89ers consumer brand of choice. But what might this nostalgic consumption of the RAF imply? For scholars such as Cooke the gesture is, above all, ‘highly ambivalent’:

⁶⁴ PLOWMAN, ‘“Was will ich denn als Westdeutscher erzählen?”’, p. 53.

⁶⁵ Florian ILLIES, *Generation Golf. Eine Inspektion* (Berlin: Argon, 2000), p. 181.

It might be read as the ultimate rejection of this past, an ironic statement that the radicalism of this generation was a pointless gesture because the memory of this terrorist group now lives on as a manifestation of the very consumer culture it sought to undermine. Or, it might be seen as a statement by the 89ers of their feeling of loss, an attempt to recuperate certain aspects of 68ers political radicalism, which they feel is missing from their own lives, in the only cultural language to which they have access.⁶⁶

However, as I shall presently examine, the intention among those who have adopted the RAF as a 'badge of honour' would appear to be less distinctive than either of these suggestions imply. The appropriation of the RAF by the 89ers would seem to be driven less by a clear act of generational disavowal or recuperation than by the RAF's suitability as rather more amorphous projection screen which is particularly compatible with the cultural language of pop which currently drives this youth cohort. We will begin this discussion by considering the factors which might have informed the rise to prominence of the RAF among this particular youth cohort, and which I argue are linked to the state's production of cultural memory.

In 2001, following the success of the 'Prada-Meinhof' clothes range, the glossy lifestyle magazine *Max* declared, 'die Zeit ist reif für RAF-Popstars.'⁶⁷ Another trend-magazine *Tussi Deluxe*, working in conjunction with *Max*, took this affirmation to its perceived logical conclusion and re-staged *Täter*-photographs of the RAF which had originally appeared in the German press in the 1970s, as well as creating its own imagined visual record of scenarios hitherto only documented in print, only with fashion models portraying the terrorists. Perhaps the most potent example of *Tussi Deluxe's*

⁶⁶ COOKE, *Representing East Germany since Unification*, p. 120.

⁶⁷ See ANDREAS, *Karl-May-RAF*, April 2001 <<http://www.salonrouge.de/raf-pop.htm>> [accessed on 29 June 2005]

‘remodelling’ of the terrorist past for pop-consumption was the recreation of the image of Andreas Baader lying in a pool of his own blood after having allegedly shot himself in his cell at Stammheim. In what is akin to a pop-perversion of Richter’s critical *RAF Zyklus*, the image is recreated down to the last detail, but with the emphasis placed on what Baader was wearing: an insert-box shows a close up of his slippers, with the slogan, ‘Andreas Baaders Woolworth-Pantoffel [sind] kult.’⁶⁸ Hence in the pages of *Tussi Deluxe* the RAF was reconstructed as a fashionable lifestyle product, or ‘terrorist chic’, one manifestation of the umbrella term ‘Mythos-RAF.’

Thus far we have only spoken about the state’s production of a cultural myth surrounding the terrorist past which was designed to negate any popular appeal for the RAF by casting the terrorists as beyond the pale of ethical conduct while exonerating the authorities as those in the right. However, the example of so-called terrorist chic is but one example of the way in which this dominant narrative actually also cultivated the opposite of its intended outcome, particularly for subsequent generations. Indeed, this re-summoning of the RAF as (fashion-)myth adheres to the state’s mythic inflation of the dramatic political developments of ’77 as a battle between ‘monstrous’ *Täter* and ‘valliant’ *Opfer*, but ‘als Pop-Phänomen’, Matteo Galli and Heinz-Peter Preußner maintain, ‘zeigt sich die Affinität terroristischer Handlungen wie deren Bewertung zum positiv verstandenen Begriff des Mythos.’⁶⁹ Thus, to evoke Fredric Jameson, ‘refracted through the iron law of fashion change and the emergent ideology of the generation’,

⁶⁸ At the time of writing *Tussi Deluxe* has long since been discontinued. See Coco DRILO, *Das RAF-Mode-Phantom*, April 2001 <<http://www.salonrouge.de/raf-hype2.htm>> [accessed on 29 June 2005], for more information and a scan of one of the double pages devoted by the magazine to the ‘RAF-fashion’.

⁶⁹ Matteo GALLI and Heinz-Peter PREÜßNER, ‘Mythos Terrorismus: Verklärung, Dämonisierung, Pop-Phänomen. Eine Einleitung’, in Matteo GALLI and Heinz-Peter PREÜßNER (eds.), *Mythos Terrorismus: Vom deutschen Herbst zum 11. September*. Jahrbuch Literatur und Politik, Band 1 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006), pp. 7-18 (8).

which for the 89ers would appear to be consumerism, radicalism is conflated with glamour and a star potential which is highly sought after in today's cult of celebrity, and terrorism with dissident heroism.⁷⁰ In effect, the vilification of the terrorists was so strong that nearly thirty years on they somewhat paradoxically appear 'cool.'

Of course this perception was, in part, helped along by the organization's efforts to perpetuate its own myth, and most notably through the *Mordthese*; the conspiratorial claim that the Stammheim dead did not commit suicide, but were murdered by the state which, for some at least, remains as *the* 'Glaubensfrage' to this day.⁷¹ Furthermore, from its inception the RAF certainly played on its modish dissident status; one need only think of the groups penchant for expensive cars despite the pressures of illegality, particularly the BMW, or 'Baader-Meinhof Wagen', as they became commonly known. But as much as the enduring and iconic appropriation of Baader and Ensslin for the modern-day consumer cult of the RAF stems, in part, from a self-perpetuating myth, its prevalence in recent years might also be taken as an expression of the fear raised previously by filmmaker Alexander Kluge that if large tracts of the memory of the RAF which did not suit the representational techniques of the state were allowed to be repressed, 'new distortions' might arise. As such, we might again suggest that the state unwittingly fostered this subsequent consumerist 'turn to terrorism' among a younger generation

⁷⁰ Fredric JAMESON, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1991), p. 19.

⁷¹ See AUST, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, pp. 655-660, for a detailed, if at times itself conspiratorially toned, discussion of the Stammheim deaths. No utterly definitive proof exists, nor is ever likely to exist, that will provide an irrefutable ruling on the matter. As much as the theory was supported by RAF members, it has also been discredited from within the organisation. In 1998 disenchanted ex-terrorist Karl-Heinz Dellwo claimed: *Wir waren mit der Mordbehauptung in einer Sackgasse und zu der Umwälzung, die stattfinden muß, nicht mehr in die Lage. So haben wir der Entstehung des Mythos zugeschaut und teilweise nachgeholfen.* For the majority of commentators, however, Dellwo's 'admission' merely served to confirm what had long since been thought obvious. See 'RAF-Mann Dellwo: Schluß mir den linken Legenden!'. *taz*, 27th June 1998.

through its purposeful atrophy of memory. The striking visual element of *Tussi Deluxe*'s mythic re-staging of 'Täter-Bilder' and photographic-imagining of *Täter* reports from the 1970s might therefore point to a perverse attempt to 'find' the RAF lost to the contemporary structuring absences of the official record's closed network of information politics; at once a symptom *of* and possible antidote *to* the forgetful, 'bilderlose Sprachregelung der Nachrichten-Medien' identified by the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* during the crisis, and mentioned in Chapter 1.

Whatever the case, the above would suggest that the appropriation of the RAF by the globalised and enduring phenomenon of pop culture is perhaps not that surprising given that, as Gabrielle Klein suggests, at its very core 'Pop ist Mythos und Kult.'⁷² Pop culture sifts through history for individuals, images, emblems and insignias, employing them both to reflect and to define, most commonly, contemporary youth culture. Pop needs to constantly draw upon myth and cult to perpetuate itself, chiefly in the form of the image production of its chosen luminaries because, as Klein goes on to suggest, 'ohne die Produktion von Bildern über die Lebensstile der Popstars ist Pop nur schwer erkennbar.'⁷³ The RAF therefore provides a rich source for 'exploitation': the premature end to the lives of Baader, Ensslin, Raspe, and earlier still, Meinhof and Meins, youthful rebellion, the relative lack of interviews with and documentation by the group's leading ideologues to shed clarity on the past as well as the group's aesthetic impulse toward fast cars, shades and designer clothes lends itself to the propagation of myth and cult on which a provocative, pop-cultural agenda can thrive.

⁷² Gabrielle KLEIN. 'Pop-Leben: Lebensstil als Inszenierungsstrategie', in Johannes G. PANKAU (ed.), *Pop-Pop-Populär. Popliteratur und Jugendkultur* (Oldenburg: Aschenbeck & Isensee Universitätsverlag, 2004), pp. 17-27 (17).

⁷³ Ibid.

However, in the vast majority of cases, the notion that RAF pop is being deployed as a direct response to the legacy of '68, either positively or negatively, is lacking. Writing in 2002, Stefan Reinecke of *taz* summarised the advent of 'radical chic' as follows:

Die RAF hat sich 1998 aufgelöst. Drei Jahre später wurde sie zum Popzeichen, zum Logo. Seit 2001 kann, wer auf das Label RAF steht, T-Shirts mit dem fünfzackigen Terroremblem oder dem Aufdruck "Prada Meinhof" kaufen – und damit sein Ich-Image mit ein paar Botschaften versehen. "Rebellion" zum Beispiel, "Provokation" und vor allem "Authentizität". Es gab ja echte Tote.⁷⁴

But the quest for authenticity in the 89er process of identity formation is innately inauthentic. Indeed, Reinecke's addendum here points to the problem inherent in the discovery of the RAF by the pop-driven 'generation of 89', namely that it is itself informed by a highly selective process of remembering and forgetting which at once decontextualizes and depoliticizes the RAF through its ignorance of the hard, often uncomfortable, historical facts that surrounded it (from the actual political aims which informed the organization to the actions and 'executions' committed in the name of its ideological value system) whilst concurrently privileging a highly aestheticised fascination with what Niels Werber terms 'die existentielle Erfahrung des Terrors, die Intensität'.⁷⁵ Reinecke makes clear that in the example of 'RAF pop', 'was die RAF war, was sie wollte, was sie tat, rückt in den Hintergrund. Die Geste zählt, nicht der Inhalt',⁷⁶ and as Jörg Schneider wryly adds, the vast majority of wearers of 'Prada Meinhof' slogan t-shirts 'wußten eher, was Prada ist als Meinhof', thus appearing to render inert any

⁷⁴ Stefan REINECKE, 'Das RAF-Gespenst', *die tageszeitung*, 5 September 2002.

⁷⁵ Niels WERBER, *Vom Glück im Kampf: Krieg und Terror in der Popkultur*, <<http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/niels.werber/Antrittsvorlesung.htm>> [accessed on 28 July 2006]

⁷⁶ REINECKE, 'Das RAF-Gespenst'.

assumption of a targeted political or generational comment.⁷⁷ The political tangibility of the RAF has been subsumed by the intangible and unquantifiable variables of youth culture such as 'looking good'. For Werber the 'Prada Meinhof' fascination with the RAF follows Schiller's dictum that 'etwas gefalle uns "in der bloßen Betrachtung und durch seine bloße Erscheinungsart", ohne daß wir bei dieser "ästhetischen" Betrachtung sonst "auf irgendeinen Zweck Rücksicht nehmen" würden.'⁷⁸ Thus divorced from its socio-political context all that counts is the gesture; a vague, stylised expression of 'Rebellion', 'Provokation' and 'Authentizität' which can also be expressed in terms of another famous dictum that would doubtless carry more weight with the youth of the *Spaßgesellschaft* – Nike's 'just do it!'. Simply put, it is a matter of style over substance, or, 'außen RAF, innen hohl'.⁷⁹

The question of authenticity raised by Reinecke, albeit from a slightly different angle, is evocative of Alison Landsberg's 2004 study, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, which considers the 'radical transformation of memory caused by the new mass cultural technologies of reproduction.'⁸⁰ For Landsberg:

[...] modernity makes possible a new form of cultural memory. This new form of memory, which I call *prosthetic memory*, emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theatre or a museum. In this moment of contact, an experience occurs

⁷⁷ See Jörg SCHNEIDER, 'Die RAF-Inflation. Wie "die Rote Armee Fraktion", kurz nach ihre Auflösung, zu einem Pop-Phänomen stilisiert wird', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 31 July 2003.

⁷⁸ Werber here is citing Schiller's 'Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen'. See WERBER, *Vom Glück im Kampf*, <<http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/niels.werber/Antrittsvorlesung.htm>>, [accessed on 28 July 2006]

⁷⁹ See *RAF als Modetrend*, <<http://archives.arte-tv.com/tracks/20010504/dtext/Vibration.htm#>> [accessed on 3 November 2003]

⁸⁰ LANDSBERG, Alison, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 3.

through which the person sutures himself or herself into a larger history [...]. In the process that I am describing, the person does not simply apprehend a historical narrative but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live. The resulting prosthetic memory has the ability to shape that person's subjectivity and politics.⁸¹

Driven by commodification, prosthetic memory is a result of mass culture which 'makes particular memories more widely available, so that people who have no "natural" claim to them might nevertheless incorporate them into their own archive of experience', thus creating what Landsberg terms an 'experiential relationship' to a past an individual did not actually live.⁸² As Landsberg avers, although 'inauthentic' – in the sense that such memories are not predicated on actual experience of a remembered event – this does not make these memories any less powerful. In her view, prosthetic memory holds a democratising, even utopian potential because it 'creates the conditions for ethical thinking precisely by encouraging people to feel connected to, while recognising the alterity of, the "other."' ⁸³ Indeed, Landsberg hold out hope for the 'possibility of a responsible mass cultural transmission of memory' which might transcend geographical and temporal breaks.⁸⁴

As such, Landsberg maintains that 'any distinction between "real" and prosthetic memories – memories that might be technologically disseminated as commodities by the mass media and worn by their consumers – might ultimately be unimportant.'⁸⁵ But the

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 2.

⁸² Ibid., p. 9.

⁸³ Ibid. Taking the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as her example as an experiential site that fosters prosthetic memory, Landsberg refers to African American students who, after visiting the museum chose to enrol in after-school classes on Holocaust history, and after which they began leading tours through the permanent exhibition: 'these students who have no "natural claim" to a Holocaust past, clearly feel a connection to it. They come to see the ramifications of the Holocaust for their own, very different, lives', p. 138.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

question still remains: what of the 89ers who quite literally wear what we might term a prosthetic memory of the terrorist past in the form of 'Prada-Meinhof' slogan t-shirts? The 89er memory of the RAF here is similarly 'adopted as a result of a person's experience with a mass cultural technology of memory that dramatises or recreates a history he or she did not live' but whereas Landsberg maintains that 'an engagement with commodities and commodified images is not, then, a retreat from the social world but a new way of participating in it'⁸⁶ which might provide new possibilities for the future, there is still little evidence to suggest that for the wearers of terrorist-chic their encounter with commodified images of the terrorist past – such as those found in the pages of *Tussi Deluxe* – actually compels them to anything meaningful. Indeed, as we have seen above there is little to suggest that the 89ers' encounter with the mass cultural memory of the RAF has roused a political response. The desire for a more just world which lurked behind the violent excess of the RAF, or even empathy with the terrorists or their victims would appear to be lacking. Although the 89ers seek out the fashion styles of the terrorists, or even wear t-shirts with the groups' images, the RAF still seems absent, that is this gesture seemingly does little to recreate the lost object 'RAF' or create an experiential relationship which might reconfigure the 89ers' otherwise largely apolitical worldview. Rather, it would seem to do little else than embody the logic of commodity and the capitalist system that spawned the 'Prada-Meinhof' fashion trend.

We might therefore suggest that by the turn of the millennium the RAF had become an 'ahistorical normality', to extend Taberner's third version of the normalization impulse to the terrorist past, in which the historical significance of the terrorist past has been supplanted by the realities of global consumer capitalism which dominate the new

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 46.

Germany.⁸⁷ In this version of normality the past is ignored unless it can be treated as a consumer product. Although the consumer paroles of 'Prada-Meinhof' refer back to the first and defining era in the history of the RAF, they only do so in that this period serves as an modern epitome of rebellion and non-conformist desire, set adrift from the socio-political context which motivated it.

For this generation the RAF as product is deployed as an amorphous 'Projektionsfläche' to reflect politically unmotivated 'heutiger Wünsche und Frustrationen', to cite Reinecke once more.⁸⁸ Less an attempt to slur or support the memory of the protest generation, the RAF is repackaged as lifestyle product 'in order to establish unique identity and subcultural style and to set the subculture apart from the parent culture', as Jonathon S. Epstein's work on youth culture would suggest.⁸⁹ In a gesture of cultural disaffiliation, for some commentators the RAF is, therefore, deployed for its perceived power to shock. Kraushaar points to 89ers appropriation of a RAF aesthetic from the quarry of the past as a predictable strategy which youth culture attempts to use to symbolically provoke and challenge its subordination to the hegemonic norm:

Die popkulturelle Besetzung von Personen, Bildern und Emblemen benutzt jedenfalls die ohnehin nur bruchstückartig aufgeklärte Geschichte der >>Roten Armee Fraktion<< (RAF) wie einen großen Steinbruch, aus dem mit

⁸⁷ Taking the redeveloped Potsdamer Platz as his example, Taberner suggest that although the arcades of its showcase Sony Centre allude to the Wilhelminian glory of the 1920s, the specifics of this past are 'decontextualized, arbitrary and entirely decorative', thus serving only to 'legitimate its celebration of a highly contemporary consumer culture.' See TABERNER, *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond*, p. xviii.

⁸⁸ Stefan REINECKE. 'Das RAF-Gespenst'. *die tageszeitung*, 5 September 2002
<<http://www.taz.de/pt/2002/09/05/a0098.1/textdruck>> [accessed on 27 July 2006].

⁸⁹ Jonathon S. EPSTEIN, 'Introduction: Generation X, Youth Culture, and Identity', in Jonathon S. EPSTEIN (ed.), *Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 1-23 (13).

Zielsicherheit all das herausgegriffen wird, was mit dem Odium eines Tabubruchs behaftet ist.⁹⁰

Echoing subcultures such as the British punk movement in the 1970s which sifted the quarry of taboo Nazi iconography, thus deploying the swastika for its shock value, the 89ers use of RAF iconography adheres to the Lévi-Straussian concept of 'style as bricolage' which 'mixes meanings to signify resistance to, and the subversion of, traditional norms', to quote Rupa Huq.⁹¹ But the youth's faith in the power of the RAF to, in its hands, unsettle the parent culture would appear to be misplaced. As filmmaker Christian Petzold suggested, referring to the unencumbered production cycle for *Die innere Sicherheit*: 'auch ist es nicht so, dass, wenn man "RAF" sagt, die Leute die Hände über dem Kopf zusammenschlagen'.⁹² This general shift exposes an ironic crux in the 89er's consumer fetishisation of the terrorist past which will be of particular pertinence to our later reading of Hans Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*.

The transformation of the RAF's political guerilla warfare into Dick Hebdige's notion of 'semiotic guerilla warfare' might be intended to endow the 89ers with a vicarious source of dissident refusal of the parent culture's societal norms, but in an unwittingly ironic twist it actually points to social conformity.⁹³ Whereas, during the 1970s, the RAF was perceived as a contaminant to the body politic so strong that it had to be expelled at all costs, the organization's current decontextualised and decorative pop-form in the hands of the youth, even if for some it does point to a vague gesture of

⁹⁰ Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, *Die RAF und die Herausforderung der Demokratie (1970-1998)* <<http://www.his-online.de/arbeitsb/brd/raf.htm>> [accessed on 15 November 2004] (para 1 of 7).

⁹¹ Rupa HUQ, *Beyond Subculture: Pop, Youth and Identity in a Postcolonial World* (Oxon & New York, 2006), p. 14.

⁹² KRIEST, 'Im Hinterland des Nihilismus', p. 11.

⁹³ Dick HEBDIGE, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002. First published by Meuthen, 1979), p. 105.

refusal, is easily absorbed. Whereas, during the 1970s, the RAF's dissent was not tolerated by the authorities because it 'issue[d] in violence and/or violent exhortation to and organization of violent opposition', to recall Marcuse, the modern decontextualised and decorative, if not entirely arbitrary, deployment of the RAF as pop-myth falls within the framework of tolerated opposition determined by the authorities. In other words, the RAF has now been interpolated by the 'repressive tolerance' of the system, thus negating the rebellious intention.⁹⁴ Whereas the reassemblage of styles in previous youth subcultures arose from underground youth scenes (even if eventually to be coopted by the hegemony), the 89ers are not as actively involved in creating 'Prada-Meinhof' style. Instead, 'Prada-Meinhof' has been produced to meet the needs of alienated youth by the corporate machine, filtering down to the high-street, shrink-wrapped and provided on rails in clothing stores. The opposition of the RAF, emblazoned on t-shirts, is now being sold back to the youth as sanitized product by the global market-place. Seemingly, the RAF had returned as 'leichtes Accessoire statt schwerer Bürde.'⁹⁵

Certainly, for Reinecke, the fact that 'Baader, Meinhof und Ensslin zu Popfiguren werden konnten, ist ein Nebeneffekt der Historisierung der RAF', but not one that points to the idea that the terrorist past is still a lingering trauma that needs resolving. Rather, for this critic, it supports the state's contention that the terrorist past is a closed casebook. Recalling our earlier use of Nietzsche, he says: 'Weil der bundesdeutsche Terrorismus im kollektiven Bewusstsein aufhörte, etwas zu sein, was wehtut, kehrt die RAF als Logo

⁹⁴ See Herbert MARCUSE, 'Repressive Tolerance', in Robert Paul WOLFF, Barrington MOORE, JR. and Herbert MARCUSE. *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), pp. 81-123 (92).

⁹⁵ See *RAF als Modetrend*, <<http://archives.arte-tv.com/tracks/20010504/dtext/Vibration.htm#>> [accessed on 3 November 2003].

Wieder – als vage Chiffre.’⁹⁶ However, in the constant toing and froing on this issue, most recently there has been yet more evidence to suggest that the pain of this past had far from alleviated.

In January 2003 the *KunstWerke Institute for Contemporary Art* (KW) in Berlin announced a multidisciplinary exhibition in collaboration with the *Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung*'s social historian and RAF expert Wolfgang Kraushaar to consider the origins and history of the Red Army Faction as well as the organization's impact on the art scene. Entitled *Mythos-RAF* the KW stated that the planned exhibition would be a critical engagement with the as yet 'unreflektierte Mythologisierung' of the Red Army Faction which had most recently found particular prominence in 89er pop culture.⁹⁷ If the previously dubious question of state funding was the weather vane of the RAF's power to unsettle, then there were no problems here - when *Mythos-RAF* was announced it had already been awarded a €100,000 grant by the *Hauptstadtkulturfond*, seemingly testifying to the position taken by Reinecke and *taz*'s Wolfgang Gast that 'this topic can be looked at so impassionately today because these ideas aren't a threat to the Federal Republic anymore [...], they can now be historicized. This was unthinkable even 10 years ago.'⁹⁸

But in the summer of 2003 the public attitude towards *Mythos-RAF* took a vicissitudinous turn following a press release by the *NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft* in Düsseldorf. The *NRW-Forum* board had voted to hold *Mythos-RAF* in Düsseldorf after its run in Berlin and, as part of the run up to the event, released a related paper on 9 July,

⁹⁶ Stefan REINECKE, 'Das RAF-Gespenst'. Jens Jessen also suggests: 'wahrscheinlich jedoch zeigt gerade die popkulturelle Vereinnahmung der RAF, dass ebendiese Gefahr nicht mehr droht.' See JESSEN, 'Mythos RAF', *die Zeit*, 31 July 2003.

⁹⁷ Dpa, 'Reemsta-Institut plant RAF-Schau', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 24 January 2003.

⁹⁸ Cited in Paul HOCKENOS, 'Hindsight Turns German Militants into T-shirt Icons', *Christian Science Monitor on-line*, October 31 2002. <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1030/ps07s02-woeu.html>>, [accessed 2 May 2004].

a passage of which suggested an apparent subtopic that would work in conjunction with the main aim of demystifying the RAF as previously outlined by the KW:

Welche Ideen, Ideale haben ihren Wert durch die Zeit behalten und können nicht als naiv abgetan werden, was haben wir aus der Geschichte über das Verhältnis von Individuum und Staat, von Möglichkeiten der Einflussnahme und über Machtstrukturen gelernt? ⁹⁹

This question was seized upon by the press as an attempt to re-mythologize the RAF, igniting a media furore which was to plague the exhibition, stalling its opening until January 2005. The inflammatory statement did not specifically refer to the RAF, pointing instead to the whole of the radical past, asking what, if anything, this *period* could teach us today. The press, however, made the connection to the RAF explicit. The *Berliner Morgenpost* reported on what it called the *NRW-Forum's* 'Ursprungskonzept' for *Mythos-RAF*, albeit in a modified form which, with the help of an editorial note, pertained to know its true meaning: 'welche Ideen, Ideale (**der RAF, Anm. D. Red.**) haben ihren Wert durch die Zeit behalten und können nicht als naiv abgetan werden?'¹⁰⁰ The *Berliner Morgenpost* was not alone in 'revising' the official *NRW-Forum* release, taking its assumed implicit meaning and making it explicit.

Relatives of RAF-victims voiced their, at times vitriolic, dissatisfaction with this 'new' aim. Hanns-Eberhard Schleyer (the son of Schleyer) and Hergard Rohwedder (the widow of RAF-victim Detlev Karsten Rohwedder) wrote on behalf of the relatives of RAF-victims to the then chancellor Gerhard Schröder and his minister of internal affairs (and former RAF lawyer) Otto Schily, stating that 'es ist nicht unsere persönliche

⁹⁹ Cited in Wolfgang KRAUSHAAR, 'Zwischen Pokultur, Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Von der Schwierigkeit, die RAF zu historisieren', *Zeithistorische Forschungen: Studies in Contemporary History*, 2 (2004) <<http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/site/40208214/default.aspx>> [accessed on 02 August 2006]

¹⁰⁰ STO, 'Konzept für RAF-Ausstellung umstritten', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 23 July 2003 (my emphasis).

Betroffenheit, sondern auch die Sorge, dass diese Ausstellung der vorhandenen Legendenbildung und Glorifizierung der RAF Vorschub leistet', perceiving the very veneration of the RAF as 'sexy' and 'glamorous' which the organizers claimed to want to counteract.¹⁰¹ Noticeably, for the those personally affected by the RAF's terror the exhibition threatened to undermine a dominant cultural narrative which, in the eyes of those who had lost family members to the organisation, showed the terrorists for the 'blindwütige Mörder' that they were, while safeguarding the reputations of their loved ones. Communicative memories in the form of family memory were, as one would expect, still very strong and painful for those personally affected, and so for the relatives of the RAF-*Opfer* the remembrance of their loved ones was not a matter to be regulated by bearers of cultural memory who might not share their perspective. The state's cultural bearers had already taken individual and family memories out of their hands, as it were, for the premature and strategic shift to cultural memory, for which such communicative *Opfer* memories formed important cornerstones. But because both the state and the relatives shared the same group identity or 'Wir-Gefühl' it was seemingly not a matter of urgency for those affected to stress the distinction between private individual or family memory and public memory discourse as both served to safeguard the reputations of their loved ones.

Thus it was one thing for the 89ers to seize on the RAF as a glamourizing myth, but quite another for cultural bearers who might not share the hegemonic agenda. Although temporal distance may have cooled the debate surrounding the RAF to the extent that it was now permissible to ask questions about the organization, they nonetheless still had to be the right questions. With the discursive consensus on the

¹⁰¹ STO, 'Konzept für RAF-Ausstellung umstritten', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 23 July 2003.

terrorist past seemingly at risk, the bite reflex of the 1970s was again visible. *Bild*, for one, ran the inflammatory headline ‘Politiker wollen Terror-Ausstellung stoppen’, attempting to suggest, as Wolfgang Kraushaar notes, that ‘ein kulturelles Unternehmen vielleicht [sich] selbst in ein Instrument des Terrorismus verwandelt haben könnte’.¹⁰² An exhibition which had been conceived as an opportunity to engage critically with the recent mythologisation of the RAF was now viewed as a RAF operation from beyond the organization’s grave which might glorify the ideals of the organization which, if one was to interpret the *NRW-Forum* statement as such, had purportedly passed the test of time. As Kraushaar made clear, above all Rohwedder and Schleyer feared, albeit incorrectly, ‘dass die Ausstellung explizit der Frage nachgehen wolle, “was aus den ‘Idealen der RAF für die Nachwelt erhaltenswert ist”’.¹⁰³ The issue of the *RAF-Opfer* remained a sticking point. The focus on the RAF had troubled the taboo Täter/Opfer binary. Although the exhibition team suggested that it should have actively involved the relatives of the victims of the RAF from the start, the battleground of the 1970s reemerged. Echoing the anti-terrorist rhetoric of the period the first question to put to Biesenbach by *Berliner Morgenpost*’s Gabriela Walde was ‘sind Sie ein RAF-Sympathisant, Herr Biesenbach?’¹⁰⁴ Biesenbach did not offer a response to the question, choosing instead to reiterate his team’s aim in conceptualizing the event. Furthermore, the sticky issue of state imposed censorship reared its head once again when the *Hauptstadtkulturfond* asked for its money back. Although it would eventually honour the original sum, the issue of

¹⁰² See KRAUSHAAR, ‘Zwischen Pokultur, Politik und Zeitgeschichte’.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Gabriela WALDE, “‘Kunst muss etwas wagen dürfen.’ Klaus Biesenbach über die umstrittene Schau’, *Berliner Morgenpost*, 24 July 2003.

state funding flip-flopped well into 2004. Clearly, the bite reflex of the 1970s and 1980s had not dulled.

As a result of the controversy surrounding the *NRW-Forum's* statement the KW was forced to backtrack. The KW's director and chief curator of the would-be exhibition, Klaus Biesenbach, stated in interview that the inflammatory, ostensible 'mission statement' was 'ein Satz, der so nie hätte veröffentlicht werden dürfen', and went on to make clear that 'solche Sätze entstehen in laufenden, hitzigen Diskussionen zur Ausstellungsplanung und zeigen kontroverse Ansätze, keineswegs aber unsere Konzept.'¹⁰⁵ The exhibition was subsequently down-sized in its scope to focus on the impact of the RAF on art under the banner 'die Kunst muss [...] im Mittelpunkt stehen', thus precluding the further involvement of Kraushaar.¹⁰⁶ The project was renamed *Zur Vorstellung des Terrors: Die RAF-Ausstellung* but the original aim of the exhibition, which had aroused no suspicion in January of 2003, remained, with Biesenbach reinforcing the point that '[es geht] weder um Mythenbildung noch Glorifizierung der RAF, sondern darum, dieser Mythenbildung auf ernsthafte Weise entgegenzuwirken.'¹⁰⁷ As far as most critics were concerned, when the now infamous exhibitions finally opened its doors to the public, it was noteworthy only for its mediocrity, with Henryk M. Broder's verdict of 'Wer nix zu sagen hat, sagt es möglichst kompliziert' speaking for the majority opinion.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, the controversy surrounding the exhibition's development suggested that, even by 2005, the wounds left by the terrorism of the 1970s had far from healed.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ See "Die Kunst muss im Mittelpunkt stehen", *Berliner Zeitung*, 16 September 2003.

¹⁰⁷ WALDE, "Kunst muss etwas wagen dürfen", *Berliner Morgenpost*, 24 July 2003.

¹⁰⁸ Henryk M. BRODER, 'Wer nix zu sagen hat, sagt es möglichst kompliziert', *Spiegel Online*, 30 January 2005 < <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,339338,00.html> > [accessed on 20 May 2005]

As we now move into a discussion of the selected filmic texts, these are the debates affecting, and issues surrounding the memory of the RAF which will inform our readings. We begin with a discussion of Christian Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* which gestures directly to Margarethe von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit*, specifically exploring what became of the utopian potential held open for subsequent generations to break the cycle of historically motivated violence identified by the filmmakers of the New German Cinema. In Andres Veiel's *Black Box BRD*, the director takes recourse to communicative memories otherwise exorcised from the dominant discourse surrounding the RAF. Veiel frustrates the terms of engagement inherent to both sides of the polarized *Täter/Opfer* binary in a bid to balance out public memory. Both the returning 68er Volker Schlöndorff and the 89er Hans Weingartner respond to the potential for radical glamour in the RAF which has been seized upon by the youth of the so-called *Spaßgesellschaft*. Although both films reject terrorism as a suitable expression of rebellion, they nonetheless look back to the wider political project of the 68ers as a positive example for those who wish to make a difference but feel that everything has been said and done, and failed. By working through the terrorist past, Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* displays a lament for lost idealism at a time when political activism and belief systems would appear to have given way to the pursuit of the next 'kick.' Weingartner goes a step further in *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, attempting to recuperate the radicalism of the past among the ostensibly depoliticized majority. Resonating with the remit of the controversial mission statement for the disputed 'RAF-Ausstellung' – 'Welche Ideen, Ideale haben ihren Wert durch die Zeit behalten und können nicht als naiv abgetan werden [...]?' – Weingartner's protagonists work through the example left to them by the

protest generation, coming into contact with the spectre of the terrorist past in the process. It is to an examination of these varied filmic texts to which we now turn.

Chapter 5

The Return of ‘Undead’ History: the West German Terrorist as Vampire in *Die innere Sicherheit* (2001)¹

In the previous chapter, I primarily examined the socio-political and aesthetic trajectory of the memory of the RAF following unification. Despite the efforts of the filmmakers of the New German Cinema to challenge contemporary repression surrounding the RAF, we considered how the West German state’s production of a cultural memory surrounding the ‘German Autumn’ – in which the urban guerrillas of the ‘old’ Federal Republic were, paradoxically, remembered to be forgotten – appeared to have held its command over the collective consciousness into the late 1990s, settling around the polarized *Täter/Opfer* binary. However, although the twentieth anniversary of the ‘German Autumn’ in 1997 saw the ‘new’ Federal Republic reinforce its predecessor’s terms of remembrance through a media barrage, the end of this decade also witnessed an intensification of increasingly restless, non-consensual versions of recent history within the hegemony of cultural memory. In part self-perpetuating, but arguably also drawing renewed strength from the defamatory tone of sanctioned discourse, ‘Mythos RAF’ rallied around new bearers in the form of the Berlin Republic’s 89er youth cohort which adopted Baader and his fellow ‘*Täter*’ as symbols of dissident heroism. Despite the line drawn under the terrorist past by the state, in many quarters there was a clear sense of unfinished business surrounding the legacy of the RAF, not least among post-unification filmmakers who,

¹ Part of this chapter has appeared previously. See Chris HOMEWOOD, ‘The Return of “Undead” History: The West German Terrorist as Vampire and The Problem of “Normalizing” The Past in Margarethe von Trotta’s *Die bleierne Zeit* (1981) and Christian Petzold’s *Die innere Sicherheit* (2001)’, in Stuart TABERNER and Paul COOKE (eds.) *German Culture, Politics and Literature into the Twenty-First Century: Beyond Normalization* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 121-36. It has been revised and expanded for inclusion in this study.

supporting the feeling held by the filmmakers of the New German Cinema that the terrorism of the RAF had been decided upon but by no means dealt with, began returning to a topic which had been declared dead but looked increasingly 'undead.'

For these reasons it is worth returning briefly to the events of 2001, when Joschka Fischer became embroiled in a dispute over a brief chapter in his radical past. Another example of West Germany's terrorist legacy resisting the sense of finality it had been allocated by the state, the spectre of organized urban violence returned, albeit not through the direct legacy of '77, but rather refracted through the broader prism of '68, in an attempt to discredit the then Vice-Chancellor. Not yet ready to be consigned to their coffin, the events of the past were impinging on the present, demanding further critical engagement before they could finally be laid to rest. The ghost-like importunity of this past was foregrounded by *Spiegel* during its coverage of the Fischer controversy which ran the cover title: 'Das Gespenst der 70er: Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit.' And, as we saw in the previous chapter, *Spiegel*, it would transpire, was not alone in ascribing an air of the supernatural to the persistence of the terrorist legacy in the present.² Regardless of having been told that 'das Thema sei durch,' director Christian Petzold, as if sensing developments that were to come, had been working on a film about terrorism since the mid-90s.³ The film became *Die innere Sicherheit* (*The State I Am In*) which portrays the life of a terrorist couple, Hans and Clara, and their child, on the run since the late 1970s. Forced into returning to Germany in the new millennium the couple's past is relayed to the spectator from the critical point of view of their teenage daughter Jeanne who is tired of the family's endless drifting from place to place. In Petzold's film, from the

² See the cover of *Spiegel*, 29 January 2001 (my emphasis).

³ HAUSER and SCHROTH, 'Das Thema ist erledigt', p. 44.

perspective of the socio-cultural and political realities of the 'new' Federal Republic, the 'generation of 68', which interrogated its parents about their involvement with the Nazi regime, now finds its own past subject to the scrutiny of its children.

Coinciding nearly simultaneously with the Fischer controversy, from a marketing point of view the timing of the film's release could not have been better, and so much so that many began to question the innocence of the director's luck. As Hanns-Georg Rodek noted: 'Verschwörungsgläubige mögen ein Komplott der Meinhof-Tochter Bettina Röhl mit dem Regisseur Christian Petzold wittern, um Joschkas Fotos kurz vor dem Kinostart der "inneren Sicherheit" in Umlauf zu bringen.'⁴ Although, as with most conspiracy theories, there was no truth to the matter, it underlined the immediacy and topicality of Petzold's film and the new vivacity that surrounded an increasingly formed debate. Of particular interest here, moreover, Petzold coded his family of fugitives in terms that echoed *Spiegel's* use of the supernatural to describe the return of RAF history, specifically evoking the vampire trope in his depiction of the returning terrorists. In Petzold's view,

Für Vampir-Filme gibt es ja eigentlich kein Ende, es gibt nur das Ende, dass irgendwann der Tod die Geister erlöst. In den späten Vampir-Filmen leiden sie und bitten um ihren Tod, damit sie endlich zur Ruhe kommen. Davon ist auch etwas in meinem Film. Die Tochter verrät beinahe die Familie, damit endlich dieser ewige Drift aufhört.⁵

Accordingly, this chapter will have two central preoccupations. Firstly, throughout I consider Petzold's use of the vampire metaphor in his exploration of a history which might be considered 'undead.' Specifically, I explore how Petzold deploys the vampire

⁴ Hanns-Georg RODEK, 'Wer zu lange an seinem Traum festhält'. *Die Welt*, 31 January 2001.

⁵ Ulrich KRIEST, 'Im Hinterland des Nihilismus: Ein Gespräch mit Christian Petzold über *Die innere Sicherheit*', *film-dienst*, 03/01(2001), pp. 10-14 (11).

trope to a seemingly contradictory end, using it both as a way to breathe life into a film about West German terrorism at a time when, as it was suggested to the director, 'das Thema sei durch', but also to underscore the exhaustion of the role played by the ideology of the RAF at the turn of the new millennium when the 'need' for terrorism to give voice to the Nazi past and that past's victims has been eroded by 'latitudinal' strides toward normality, to recall Taberner. Clearly, however, stressing the latter does not preclude the need Petzold feels to return to, and work through this topic on its own terms. Despite the strange historical symbiosis between Nazi crimes and the shockwave of left-wing terror they allegedly provoked, models of normality which suggest that a line might now be drawn under the Nazi past do not suggest to Petzold that a similar line can, therefore, simply be drawn under the legacy of the RAF also. Instead, he highlights its continued unnerving place on the periphery of the collective psyche of the Berlin Republic which feels that it has already consigned this period of history to the grave, and so the need for further investigation with it.

Secondly, this chapter will consider the way in which Petzold opens up a dialogue with West German film history. There are numerous parallels which suggest that *Die innere Sicherheit* can be read as a quasi-sequel to, or revisitation of, Margarethe von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit* which plays on and reassesses the tropes of the earlier film; as well as a shared aesthetic approach and a focus on the politics of the personal, Petzold asks what has become of the utopian potential of the child proposed by von Trotta during the conclusion of *Die bleierne Zeit*, which had seen Jan imbued with the potential to break the generational bind of historically motivated cycles of violence. Twenty years later, how does his female successor Jeanne fare with the obsessive ghost of West

Germany's terrorist past? However, before turning to the films themselves it is first necessary to consider the broader cultural and filmic implications of viewing terrorism through the metaphor of the vampire since the 1990s, and to which we now turn.

Cultural uses of the vampire trope

The cultural meanings of the vampire have, since the creature's inception, been many and varied, if always deadly. The very fact that, in 150 years, vampire narratives have rarely shared a singular vision is testimony to the pliable nature of the trope, the modern incarnations of which draw their inspiration from both literary and filmic origins. To consider the fully formed literary origin of the creature is to recall Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and the credit for initiating the screen tradition of the vampire goes to its unofficial and, as a result, subsequently banned adaptation, F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922). Although the vampire trope is highly malleable, its varied cultural implications do, generally speaking, share one common trait — to 'vampirise' a subject is to demonize it, and thereby exclude it from the mainstream. This is seen most clearly in the connection of the vampire to the Eastern Jew. Bram Stoker's Count Dracula is described as 'a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard' who hoards gold from many different lands in his castle.⁶ Similarly, as Coates points out, in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, the Count Orlok's 'stereotypical "Semitic" nose, fabled wealth, and propensity for travel anticipate the repertoire of anti-Semitism,' which fears the effect of the Eastern Jew's cosmopolitan and unchecked mobility, that is, the belief that he will bleed a country of its wealth and take it elsewhere.⁷ Indeed, the versatility of the metaphor means that the mark of the vampire need not be tied exclusively to the sphere

⁶ Bram STOKER, *Dracula* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 207.

⁷ COATES, *The Gorgon's Gaze*, p. 95.

of capital and anti-Semitism. For instance, in *Reading the Vampire*, Gelder draws his reader's attention to the coup in Romania in 1989 whereby western journalists painted the communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu as 'a new "Dracula."' ⁸ Thus, capitalism's obverse is equally as susceptible to the vampire's bite. In short, to vampirize, then, is to inflict the mark of 'Other'; a person or group, as Gelder suggests, 'is vampirized in order to be recognised and, it follows, *restricted*.' ⁹ Such has certainly been true since the events of September 11 2001 in New York; the universal demonisation of the newly perceived threat of world terror has seen a shift to a specific vampirization of terrorism. A simple internet search with the words 'terrorist' and 'vampire' yields a substantial number of entries with articles suggesting that the Madrid bombing in 2004, for example, was the direct consequence of the Spanish people having 'invited a vampire to enter their house': 'the vampire is terror [...] the radically new form of terror that came to the world's attention on 9/11, namely catastrophic terror.' ¹⁰ Here one might also mention the successful popular novel *Second Sunrise* (2004) which portrays a Nazi who is also a vampire and a terrorist. ¹¹ Such a link is perhaps unsurprising. In a similar fashion to the terrorist who attempts to impose his ideological perspective on the unwilling through acts of violence, the vampire's attempt to change the living in line with its own image represents a threat to individual liberty. Moreover, both the vampire and the terrorist are excluded from society, the one inhabiting the underworld, the other the underground. Above all, however, both the vampire and the terrorist prompt a similar reaction from

⁸ GELDER, *Reading the Vampire*, p. 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁰ Lee HARRIS, *Inviting the Vampire*, <www2.techcentralstation.com/0319043.html> [accessed 11 April 2005]

¹¹ See David and Aimee THURLO, *Second Sunrise* (New York: Forge, 2004).

society, 'that is,' as Gelder suggests, 'they evoke a response that is not entirely rational.'¹²

One need only look to the climate of fear, paranoia and political repression which characterized West Germany in the late-1970s to find evidence of this irrationality. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, the application of the vampire trope to the legacy of the Baader-Meinhof generation of political activists in West Germany that we find in Petzold's film is not a new phenomenon. Rather, much like the vampire itself which haunts our collective awareness from the shadows of the underworld, the application of the trope to the phenomenon of West German terrorism has always been there, albeit lurking on the edge of critical awareness. In Chapter 3, we noted how the vampire was mentioned in the same breath as the terrorist much earlier, flagged up, albeit briefly, by Coates in relation to von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit*. Advancing Coates, we suggested that the perceived postwar inability to mourn National Socialist atrocities resulted in its own vampire narrative, in which the children sought to protest the unwanted burden they had inherited *and* to give voice to the victims of their parents' crimes. But how might we apply this reading some twenty years after the height of terrorist activities? With all of this in mind, let us return to Petzold's narrative.

The West German terrorist as vampire

After roughly fifteen years on the run across Europe following unspecified acts of terrorism, Hans and Clara are forced into returning home to Germany with their teenage daughter Jeanne following an opportunistic burglary of their apartment in Portugal, the latest in a long line of temporary homes in their life on the run. Taught from 'home',

¹² GELDER, *Reading the Vampire*, p. x.

Jeanne has been learning Portuguese in preparation for what Hans and Clara believe will be their final move to Brazil. However, following the burglary the family's funds and fake passports, all of which allowed them to negotiate the terrorist underground, are gone and, worst of all, their true identities have been potentially betrayed to the local authorities. Hans and Clara have no choice but to return to the site of their past crimes, requiring the help of former ideological allies who now reside in the 'new' Germany.

But Hans and Clara return to Germany only to find that the ideology they still cling to is now dead. They have dropped off the grid and out of history, taking their daughter Jeanne with them and thus deferring her potential to strike out by herself and carve her own identity. After pulling up at the German border, the family takes a brief break after the long journey and, as Hans and Clara hunt down coffee, Jeanne is left to pore over the national flag as it is whipped around in the wind in an extreme close-up; in a silent exchange she meditates on the implications of this 'foreign land.' Indeed, the Germany to which Petzold's terrorist family returns is a radically different political entity to the 'old' Federal Republic against which Hans and Clara had defined their own identity, but they remain ignorant of the fact that the historical moment has shifted – the social landscape they have returned to is no longer wholly consumed by the Nazi past and the scrutiny of state practices, as was the case for von Trotta's sisters. This central tenet of the political debates that informed the terrorist activities of the 1970s appears highly anachronistic in the Berlin Republic of the 1990s intent upon 'normalization'. And, as we shall see, the inability of the couple to realize that the socio-political context has shifted has fatal implications in Petzold's resurrection of 'undead' history.

Die innere Sicherheit is a film in which ‘das Geisterhafte, das Unkörperliche,’ as Petzold suggests, ‘betont werden.’¹³ The white Volvo in which the family makes its return to Germany resembles a hearse, even a coffin and, as we shall see, it is the only space in which their ideology, and ultimately they themselves can continue to exist, echoing the vampire’s need to carry his native soil with him. Petzold imbues the family with the attributes of apparitions — after they fail to secure help from a former associate they vanish into the surrounding woods as quickly as they had materialized. In the same way, when Jeanne races to get home literally before sunrise she is confronted by her mother, who is suddenly, and seemingly out of nowhere, stood in the forest awaiting her daughter’s return.

In numerous interviews Petzold refers to the American director Kathryn Bigelow’s vampire film *Near Dark* (1987) as a source of inspiration for his film.¹⁴ Despite a limited theatrical release and then the belief that the film’s master copy had been lost to a fire, Bigelow’s *Near Dark* achieved cult status when the print was resurrected and released on home video. *Near Dark* stands as a precursor to the post-modern take on the vampire that was to follow in the 1990s (with television shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* [1997-2003] and films such as the *Blade* trilogy [1998-2004]) in which the vampire was increasingly ‘humanized’; a further testimony to the trope’s pliable nature, many of the perceived rules associated with the theme fell by the way side as the undead were increasingly fleshed out into rounded characters. In *Near Dark*, Kathryn Bigelow fuses the genre of the vampire film with the western, eschewing

¹³ KRIEST, ‘Im Hinterland des Nihilismus’, p. 11.

¹⁴ Petzold was first exposed to *Near Dark* by his co-writer on *Die innere Sicherheit* and veteran of the New German Cinema, Harun Farocki. A then tutor at the *Berliner Film- und Fernsehakademie*, Farocki screened Bigelow’s film to his seminar group, which included Petzold, in the early 1990s. See, for example, Christiane PEITZ, ‘Nach dem Schiffbruch’. *Tagesspiegel*, 25 January 2001.

most of the iconography associated with the former in her depiction of the undead as fugitives. In fact, the word ‘vampire’ is never uttered during the film (echoing Bigelow’s approach, the word ‘terrorist’ is never uttered during Petzold’s film). Bigelow’s ‘undead’ seemingly have no visibly exaggerated canine teeth, nor do garlic, holy water or crucifixes bother them. Their only real enemy is sunlight and to a lesser extent the authorities who attempt to hunt them down due to their predation of the local townsfolk. Bigelow grants us an inside view of the banalities of life for a family of vampires who take no excitement from what they are. Rather this is just their way of life where it is the small everyday things that irritate them — crouching over a dead biker and ready to feed, Severen bemoans ‘I hate it when they haven’t shaved.’

It is in a similar vein that Petzold evokes the image of the vampire in his depiction of a family of terrorists on the run. Eschewing the mythologizing potential surrounding the legacy of the RAF which, as we saw in the previous chapter, has followed the terrorists from the mysterious circumstances surrounding the deaths in Stammheim to the appropriation of Baader and Meinhof as pop-‘heroes’ for the Berlin Republic’s youngest generation, Petzold purposefully mixes his metaphors to create a narrative and aesthetic look which is inherently opposed to the ideas of radical glamour found elsewhere. In this regard the director also drew inspiration from the biography of terrorist Wolfgang Grams (which Veiel’s *Black Box BRD*, to be discussed in the next chapter, engages with in detail). Petzold notes:

Ich las, daß [...] Wolfgang Grams Marmelade eingekocht hat, irgendwo in der Anonymität des Untergrunds. Daß der Lieder, Blueslieder, geschrieben hat. Für

eine Frau. Nachrichten aus dem Untergrund, die davon erzählten, daß da irgendwelche Gespenster an ihrer Menschenwerdung arbeiteten.¹⁵

Not only do the banal details of Gram's daily existence oppose the exhilarating terrorist underground of pop-culture's imagination, they also expose the human dimension dispensed with by the 'inhuman' terrorist of the hegemonic imagination, but which Petzold's resurrection of 'undead' history ironically recovers. A later section will return to the way in which *Die innere Sicherheit* stresses the banality and hardships of life in the terrorist underground, but for now let us continue with our appraisal of Petzold's ascription of the vampire to his family of fugitives.

There was no shortage of reviews to make the link between Bigelow's vampires and Petzold's family of outlaws, but none considered the wider implications of the vampire trope for the representation of terrorism. In many ways the postmodern take on the vampire has breathed new life into the genre. Both the film and television versions of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* use the vampire genre to underline their main aim, which in Gelder's view is the 'mobilization of a Californian suburban adolescent girl,' in order to highlight the empowerment of her generation.¹⁶ But crucially, just as the cultural connotations of the vampire have changed with time, so too has the meaning of terrorism in a German context. Petzold's use of the vampire in his depiction of West German terrorists can similarly be read as reinvigorating the 'genre,' applying the metaphor of the undead to 'undead' history which appeared to have lost its social and aesthetic resonance. However, contrary to the postmodern incarnation of the vampire, in which 'what is usually "beyond" culture is called upon to produce a certain level of empowerment in culture,' to cite Gelder once more, the mobilizing effects of the trope may prevent

¹⁵ Cited on the inlay to the Media Corporation One DVD release of *Die innere Sicherheit*.

¹⁶ GELDER, *Reading the Vampire*, p. 144.

exhaustion in the 'genre,' but in the case of Petzold's terrorist spouses its use ultimately only serves to underscore the actual exhaustion of this family on the run as well the metaphorical exhaustion of their terrorist ideology in post-unification Germany.¹⁷

The urgency with which the vampire trope could be ascribed to the acts of terror committed by the Baader-Meinhof group in the 1970s is negated post-unification, particularly if one considers the Red-Green Coalition's endeavours to make the Nazi past politically visible. Although a good deal has changed since Hans and Clara went into hiding, they remain rooted in the past and past experience, clinging to an ideology which died along with the RAF's cessation of armed conflict, if not before. As such, the family is locked out from participating in the present and so their journey through Germany becomes the journey of a family of ghosts through the past. This is made evident to the spectator throughout. Hans and Clara are only really capable of inhabiting the shadows and the night, and so are rarely seen in daylight. When they do step into the daylight it is motivated by the pressures of illegality, most vitally the need to recuperate their diminished funds. Initially the family visits Achim for help, an old friend from the protest generation who, much to Hans' disgust, has moved on from his radical roots and clearly profited from the 68ers long march, living in an impressive villa with his daughter Paulina which is full of the consumer trappings of a successful career. Achim makes it clear that he 'mit der ganzen Scheiße nichts mehr zu tun haben [will]' and discloses that that his car is tax deductible, the prospect of which enrages Hans: 'Du läßt deinen Wagen vom Staat bezahlen!?' Echoing the political import of the Fischer debate, the successful 68er is confronted with the terrorist, an aberrant and unwelcome echo from his past which might threaten his present identity.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Given Hans and Clara's inability to accept this new social reality, it is interesting that the conspiratorial sign the family uses to announce its arrival to another former associate, Klaus, is a beaten-up copy of Melville's *Moby Dick*. Although Petzold consciously avoids using direct reference to the activities of the RAF in his fictional narrative, the inclusion of Melville's novel gestures towards a contextual legacy for Petzold's otherwise unaffiliated terrorists; adopted by Gudrun Ensslin as a revolutionary allegory (with the ubiquitous white whale symbolizing the state), the leading cadre of the Baader-Meinhof generation of the RAF took its codenames from the text. However, the novel which Ensslin read as a revolutionary allegory in the 1970s now serves only to foreshadow the film's tragic conclusion; in the same way that Captain Ahab's blinkered and unremitting pursuit of the white whale leads him only to his death, Hans and Clara's relentless pursuit of a dead political ideology will result in their ultimate destruction. The larger question, and to which we will return later, is whether or not they will take Jeanne down with them. Like Achim, Klaus has also moved on from his radical past. Klaus, we discover, established a small publishing house in their absence which he has since sold to a larger concern which keeps his name on as a promotional tool – a token leftist figurehead, we discover, is good for sales. It is Jeanne who is sent out with the book to meet Klaus. As she leads him back to her parents they walk and talk, with Klaus asking Jeanne if she has read the abridged version of the book without the pedagogic or didactic subtext. Jeanne looks puzzled as Klaus applauds Melville's style, in particular his lucid description of nature and the sea. By privileging the purity of Melville's prose over the political meaning the RAF inferred from it, the filmic narrative underscores further the extent to which Klaus has left his radical roots behind him. He agrees to help the family,

but out of a personal motivation predicated on his fondness for Jeanne and her mother who was once his lover. For his efforts, Klaus is eventually arrested.

Hans and Clara are living anachronisms, ghosts who cannot inhabit the present and so whose insistence over the past is out of place in the Germany that they return to. In a further desperate attempt to secure funds we see Hans attempting to locate an old stash of money by feverishly digging in a graveyard at night, now the only place where the vestiges of the terrorist past can be found on German soil. Rachel Palfreyman picks up on the cinematic resonance in the scene, which again recalls Gabi Teichert's 'obsessive "digging for history"' in both *Die Patriotin* (1979) and, of course, the earlier *Deutschland im Herbst*.¹⁸ But whereas in *Deutschland im Herbst* such activities were coded as vital and productive, here such labours fall flat; as Clara and Jeanne look on Hans successfully excavates the money, but the old-issue Deutschmarks are now out of date. Initially not realizing that the huge number of notes is in fact worthless, Jeanne's excitement is tempered by Hans' deflating retort – 'Geschichtsunterricht.'

The erosion of the 'old' Federal Republic, the old enemy against which Hans and Clara defined themselves, has dealt an irrevocable blow to their identity. The instability of their identity in the 'new' Federal Republic is exemplified in their disastrous attempt to rob a bank in a last ditch attempt to raise the money they need to fund their final flight to Brazil. Their future is still chained to their past, but with that past having lost its currency they have no choice but to step out of the shadows and take action. However, the past cannot coexist with the here and now.

In their comically out-of-step disguises Hans and Clara appear as caricatures of the standard look for bank robbing terrorists of the 1970s, thus further underlining their

¹⁸ See PALFREYMAN, 'The Fourth Generation', p. 20.

status as living anachronisms. Petzold stated that ‘als wir den Überfall gedreht haben, habe ich die Schauspieler an diesen Marxsatz erinnert, der besagt, dass alles zweimal kommt, einmal als Tragödie und einmal als eine Farce. Für mich ist das eine Farce, die Figuren pfeifen bei dieser Aktion wirklich auf dem letzten Loch!’¹⁹ Furthermore, the bank robbery evokes Fassbinder’s carnivalesque depiction of lost political ideals in *Die dritte Generation*, emphasized through the use of the grotesque and the fantastic, as ‘a comedy, or, rather a parlour game on the topic of terrorism.’²⁰ The bank robbery also consolidates Hans and Clara’s ghostly status. The camera does not follow Hans and Clara into the bank. Instead, we witness the action after the event and from the perspective of the bank surveillance camera. Unlike the director’s camera which captures images at a rate of 24 frames every second, the bank’s camera records at only 5 frames per second, producing an intriguing aesthetic peculiarity: only every other second of the robbery is recorded and so Hans and Clara’s visibility becomes intermittent. They seemingly fade in and out of existence like ghostly apparitions – half present, half absent and unable to fully occupy the present.

In the case of *Die bleierne Zeit*, the ‘vampire’ terrorists were wholly destructive, punishing society for the oblivion visited upon them by the past and giving voice to the victims of fascism whose fate had been neglected in light of West Germany’s perceived inability to face its past. Post-unification, however, the social context has shifted and so Coates’ ascription of the vampire can no longer be applied in the same way. Representatives of their generation may have ascended to Germany’s seats of power, but

¹⁹ Katja NICODEMUS, ‘Das Phantom der Linken’, *Tageszeitung*, 01 February 2001.

²⁰ Rainer Werner FASSBINDER, ‘“Madness and terrorism”: Conversations with Gian Luigi Rondi about Despair and The Third Generation’, in Michael Töteberg and Leo A. Lensing (eds.), Krishna Winston (trans.), *The Anarchy of the Imagination. Interviews, Essays, Notes* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, 1992), p. 126.

in the process they have moved away from the blinkered view of the past that Hans and Clara still share. The 68ers' 'long march through the institutions' has, and not without a sense of irony, led to the formation of a country that is no longer wholly dominated by the Nazi past, due in no small part to Schröder and Fischer's embracing of the concept of 'normalization.' The implications of the reassessment of the Nazi past for Petzold's protagonists are clear. Specifically, Hans and Clara's acts of terror are no longer required to give voices to the dead who have now found new representatives to acknowledge them publicly.

Indeed, the 'new' Federal Republic is at once at greater ease with, yet predicated on, a critical engagement with the Nazi past. Far from denying the past, this new Germany has acknowledged, for example, responsibility for the treatment of the Nazi's Eastern European forced labourers, as well as offering official apologies to Jewish organizations for past crimes and has since worked to a consensus, even if uneasy, for the recently built Holocaust memorial in Berlin. It would therefore appear that Hans and Clara's terrorism no longer speaks for the dead but for them alone. The victims of Nazi atrocities have found a healthy form of representation in the public arena and now Hans and Clara are guilty of failing to mourn their own demise – specifically the death of their terrorist ideology. This refusal to move on has considerable implications for their daughter, an examination of which we will now turn to.

Eine bleierne Kindheit: Petzold's German daughter and the micro-politics of family commitment

Die innere Sicherheit upholds the turn to family commitment which von Trotta adopted in her exploration of West German urban terrorism, dealing in the politics of the personal, specifically exploring the micro-politics of a family unable to inhabit the present. Rooted

at the centre of a familial codex of denial and moral complicity is Hans and Clara's daughter Jeanne, a teenager who is denied the chance to be so. From the shadowy vantage point of her apartment balcony in Portugal at the beginning of the film she secretly observes her Portuguese peers and potential friends as they do what mid-teens do – they hang out on the street, chatting, laughing and light-heartedly goading one another. To the causal observer this is nothing more than the banal rituals of teenage life, but to the socially excluded Jeanne the scene is riveting, a taboo situation that she can only observe from the sidelines before returning to the gloom of her dimly-lit apartment.

Jeanne's position is the most problematic in the film. Her chance to strike out by herself has been kept in stasis by her parents' terrorism. Whereas a line was drawn under Marianne's terrorism by her death in *Die bleierne Zeit*, thereby giving her son the opportunity to mourn her passing and the events of the recent past with Juliane as a guide, Jeanne is not able to mourn her parent's life of terror because they refuse to give it up. Instead, Jeanne is unwillingly forced to feed their life's project. As such, she suffers from a complete dispossession of any usable, sustainable identity. This is amply demonstrated during the family's visit to Achim. While Hans quarrels with Achim, Jeanne is asked to wait in the hall but she is drawn to the sound of contemporary urban music emanating from the top of the stairs. She investigates and finds Achim's teenage daughter, Paulina, listening to the music and smoking out of her bedroom window. Jeanne hovers by Paulina's door before nudging her way into the room. Initially Paulina is unaware of Jeanne who, in a long shot, is now standing in front of a full-length mirror. The scene is shot at such an angle that Jeanne has no reflection and so like the vampire whose inability to cast its own image signifies its separation from the living, we become

aware of just how close Jeanne is to being appropriated by the terrorist underground, a process that will surely be completed if Jeanne joins her parents in their flight to Brazil. Jeanne is completely devoid of self-image and so instead, standing with her back to Jeanne, Paulina's reflection fills in the empty space where Jeanne's image should be. As such, Paulina stands as Jeanne's double, externalizing her repressed teenage instincts and representing an identity that Jeanne would like for herself, if it were only possible. Paulina invites Jeanne in to her room and for a brief moment she transcends the threshold, stepping through the looking glass into the present and a normal teenage life. The girls listen to the music, share a cigarette and Jeanne laughs for the first and only time in the film, but this taste of normality which the reluctant terrorist-teenager so desperately craves is short-lived and only moments later her mother enters the room, summoning her back to the shadows. Hans and Clara's terrorism can longer be described as a symptom, but has instead become the cause of their daughter's disjunction from the land of the living. Her life is consumed by her parents' past, by an ideology that she did not decide upon for herself but was rather born into. Hans and Clara's past has become a suffocating narrative, or 'postmemory' for their daughter.

The transmission of memories within the families of eyewitnesses to an event, primarily the Shoah, stands at the centre of Marianne's Hirsch's conception of 'postmemory.'²¹ In Hirsch's taxonomy postmemory denotes the experiences of the second generation within a family, usually the children of Holocaust survivors, who, although they did not participate in an event, grew up surrounded by eyewitness accounts of it. Postmemory is, therefore, situated somewhere between memory and history, 'distinguished', as it is, 'from memory by generational distance', but also 'from history

²¹ See HIRSCH, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*.

by deep personal connection', thus describing a paradox whereby an individual is at once linked to an event and forever removed from it. Above all, Hirsch stresses that 'postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because it is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation.'²² This implicit connection to a past narrative can be so powerful that an individual becomes dominated by past experience, and thus rendered incapable of creating and pursuing his/her own stories. At its most intense:

Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grew up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated.²³

Drawing on Hirsch's suggestion that the notion of postmemory need not be tied exclusively to the children of Holocaust survivors but might also 'usefully describe other second-generation memories of cultural or collective traumatic events and experiences',²⁴ Rachel Palfreyman also views Jeanne's struggle to deal with her parental legacy in the terms set out by postmemory, with the young Jeanne subject to 'a generational bind, which is relentless and obsessive, as Hirsch puts it.'²⁵

²² Ibid., p. 22.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ For Palfreyman's application of Hirsch's theory see her, 'The Fourth generation', pp. 19-20. Recently, Susan Rubin Suleiman has sought to delineate Hirsch's concept further, setting a '1.5 Generation' against the second-generation that colours postmemory. Rather than children of Holocaust survivors, Suleiman focuses on child survivors of the Holocaust themselves who, although too young to have possessed an adult comprehension of this traumatic event, were nonetheless present. Whereas, for Suleiman, the second-generation is characterised by its 'belatedness' to an event, the '1.5 generation's shared experience is that of bewilderment and helplessness' which, paradoxically, is 'often accompanied by premature aging, having to act as an adult while still a child.' This is applicable to Jeanne's situation who grew up in the terrorist underground and is treated more like a comrade than a daughter by her parents who, even worse, implicate their daughter in their present crimes. See Susan Rubin SULEIMAN, 'The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust'. *American Imago*, 59, 3 (2002), pp. 277-295 (277).

Certainly then, at its most 'relentless and obsessive', the evacuating potential of postmemory becomes akin to what we might also term a vampire narrative or memory, in the sense that the transmission of past experience across generations comes at a parasitic cost to those living, or in Jeanne's case, attempting to live, in the here and now. In *Die bleierne Zeit* we considered how the unprocessed Nazi past was posited by von Trotta as a suffocating horror story that was allowed to dominate the subsequent narrative of her own morally uncompromised generation. Juliane's efforts to work through this past and its bearing on her sister's life of terror thus represented a symbolic, belated act of *Trauerarbeit* which, von Trotta suggested, the adult population had not been capable of after 1945. This dialectic was then incorporated in Juliane's efforts to break the silence of contemporary repression surrounding the RAF, symbolized through her bid to help Jan come to terms with the terrorism of his mother in the hope of breaking the cycle of historically motivated violence. Although Marianne's story is carried over to her son, with Juliane as a guide and mediator, the film suggests optimistically that it will not be at the cost of his own narrative; she processes the immediate past for him precisely so it might not become an 'obsessive and relentless' postmemory that will consume him and so the hope for a future free of violence. But as we have seen, although the repression that had surrounded the Nazi past has since been punctured, such filmic efforts to stem the tide of contemporary repression surrounding the RAF were not carried over in to the public sphere with the same degree of success, with hegemonic cultural memory laying claim to a cathartic resolution which, for filmmakers both past and present, continued to belie an unprocessed trauma. In the figure of Jan's female successor, Petzold suggests that, if left unprocessed, the terrorist legacy might still become a suffocating

postmemory, a vampire narrative that could threaten the progression of subsequent generations.

Not only is Jeanne devoid of self-image, she lacks a voice of her own, capable only of articulating her parents' narrative. When asked by her secret boyfriend Heinrich why she is home-taught, Jeanne replies that 'die deutschen Schulen haben ja nichts mehr, sie sind total fertig.' Such words speak to the tune of her parental generation's attack on the education system during the sixties, even if, in an ironic twist, such an educational outcome for Jeanne's generation has since been laid at the feet of the 68er generation. Furthermore, unhappy with the practical but unstylish clothes she has to wear Jeanne complains that 'Überangepasstheit macht auch verdächtig,' aware that this is the only language her parents understand. The bearing of this past poses problems for her potential relationship with Heinrich. Not far from the mark, Heinrich initially thinks that the secretive Jeanne is a member of a cult. In a mock interrogation Heinrich turns his desk lamp on Jeanne and starts probing her family circumstances. Jeanne simply falls silent. Here we are reminded of Coates' use of 'silence' as a 'rhyme' for violence. For Jeanne, the silence over her parents past has never been broken leading to a perpetuation of violence for the young girl – her parents' past is the root of a violent confrontation in which Heinrich slaps her across the face and, recalling Jan who suffered for the sins of his mother, she is hurt during a violent altercation at the train station.

Perhaps the most pertinent example of the evacuating potential Hans and Clara's narrative over their daughter occurs when Jeanne visits a local school, a significant example both of her situation and the intertextual relationship between *Die innere Sicherheit* and *Die bleierne Zeit*. As the only member of her family readily able to step

out of the shadows, Jeanne is sent out from the safe house to do the shopping. In an ironic expression of the extent to which Jeanne craves a 'normal' life, she decides to play truant from her underground duties by going to school. Jeanne hangs around outside the gates smoking and before long a pupil passes by, asks her for a cigarette and, taking Jeanne for one of her peers, also asks whether or not she is going to the film being shown in place of class. Jeanne heads in, but only to be confronted by Resnais' seminal documentary *Nuit et brouillard*.

As the lights go up on Resnais' film the faces of the 89er students' seemingly fail to register any kind of response to same images of Nazi horror that had prompted a profound psychological response in von Trotta's sisters. When the students do recoil, it is only because their teacher uses the film as a tool in classroom politics, a platform from which to launch an infuriated attack on their level of attendance; how few of them ever turn up to class, yet when a film is show he gets a full house. Furthermore, by referring to *Nuit et brouillard* as merely 'a film' the teacher similarly negates the historical veracity and resonance of Resnais' text. Clearly, 'this is a society in which the burdens of German history, still fundamental to the self-conception of the "68er",' as Plowman notes, 'are receding from view.'²⁶ But that is why for Jeanne, the film showing proves to be a traumatic moment; not because of the (faded) burden of the Nazi past which it denotes, but the hold that her parents' suffocating self-conception prompted by this past holds over her, and which Resnais' text connotes. Indeed, for Petzold, 'träumt sich [Jeanne] in die Schule hinein, und es wird ein Albtraum daraus. Denn sie sieht dort eben jenen Film,

²⁶ PLOWMAN, "'Was will ich denn als Westdeutscher erzählen?'"', p. 54.

durch den ihre Eltern politisiert wurden.'²⁷ As she strives to fit in with potential peers Jeanne is confronted with an episode in German history which von Trotta also reads as the likely motivational core for the terrorism of Jeanne's parents' generation, and under which she now personally suffers.

The Germany that Hans and Clara return to is dominated by the pop culture of the 89er youth cohort that Jeanne would willingly embrace over the stifling paroles of her parents' terror. Occupying a liminal space and so the only person in her family able to readily step out of the shadows, we see the Berlin Republic from the perspective of the fifteen-year-old Jeanne and are left in no doubt that this is the Germany of the *Spaßgesellschaft*. Whereas her parents search for traces of the past, Jeanne's quest for identity is a wholly contemporary affair, based not on ideology, but lifestyle. Jeanne craves fashionable clothes – the bumblebee print, sunflower yellow jumper and Aldi shell-suit in a jarring mix of magenta and purple she is forced to wear due to her parents' pragmatic conservation of funds represents social suicide to the would be trendy teen – the latest music and Heinrich, with whom she has fallen in love, is a penniless 'McJobber' working at Pizza Hut, a clear invocation of the colonizing force of American culture which has all but replaced the ideological value system of Hans and Clara's generation. In Petzold's film the identity of the 68er generation is in the process of being thoroughly dispersed in the post-ideological Berlin Republic in favour of life-long shopping.

As we shall presently discuss, Petzold would seem to take an ambivalent position with regard to aspects of this shift. We are certainly sympathetic towards Jeanne's

²⁷ Christiane PEITZ, 'Nach dem Schiffbruch' (Gespräch mit Christian Petzold), *Tagesspiegel*, 25 January 2001.

shoplifting which becomes necessary to procure the teenage wares that her political situation denies her; after her ill-fated visit to school she steals CDs and clothes, including street trainers, jeans and a 'Maradonna' slogan t-shirt. But while Petzold makes no direct reference to the public record of terrorism we must assume that, if the 'Prada-Meinhof' slogan t-shirt phenomenon does exist in his filmic universe, Jeanne would be the last person to adopt this particular expression of 89er style. Certainly, while the director by and large supports Jeanne's move to adopt the 'normality' of consumerism which her parents' generation fought against, his film refutes unequivocally the ubiquitous turn to 'terrorist chic' in the public sphere. Indeed, as far as the film's co-writer Harun Farocki was concerned: 'Keine Re-Mythisierung. Das war die Hauptsache', an aim which Petzold clarified in interview:

Wir hatten eine intensive Phase [...], während der immer mehr aus dem Buch rausgeflogen ist, was irgendwie den Mythos zeigt. Da gab es noch BKA-Szenen am Anfang und Verhörsituationen, da stelle ich mir immer Menschen mit langen Trenchcoats vor, die rauchen.²⁸

Any potential for dissident heroism is negated by a sobering aesthetic of decay and paranoia which follows Hans and Clara to their ultimate demise. In a sequence aptly titled *Paranoia Kreuzung* on the DVD release of the film, Hans and Clara, who perceive threats around them at all times, pull up to a junction in an industrial zone and mistake the vehicles which quickly flank them for the authorities. Furthermore, Hans' immediate reaction is not to get embroiled in a gun fight. Rather, he pushes his wife and daughter to the floor of the car before stepping out with his hands on his head in an instant gesture of capitulation. Far from corresponding to the dissident ethos of 'the terrorist' which the

²⁸ Michael ALTHEN and Bernt REBHANDL, 'Wie das Politbüro die Verhältnisse im deutschen Film zum Tanzen brachte' (Gespräch mit Christian Petzold und Harun Farocki), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 May 2002.

youth of the Berlin Republic proudly display on their chests, the banalities and hardships of life on the run are foremost concerns of the film which serve only to demystify the defiant privileging of the RAF's *Täter* status, itself a side-effect of the repressive structuring techniques of dominant cultural memory surrounding urban terrorism which has spilled over in to the narrative of a younger generation.

Other manifestations of the 89er consumer lifestyle centre on Jeanne's relationship to Heinrich. One of the few areas of the film to receive criticism, Jeanne and Heinrich's relationship represents a narrative contrivance. Heinrich is from Hamburg – conveniently the family's next destination – and it is his description of what he claims to be his lavish and now abandoned family home there which leads the young lovers back to each other; Jeanne leads her parents to the luxury villa which becomes their new safe-house, in part from a practical need for accommodation, but also from a desire to feel closer to Heinrich. Heinrich tells Jeanne about the villa during a secret rendezvous on the beachfront in Portugal. The reason the family home stands empty, he claims, is because it became a site of family trauma; his mother committed suicide, drowning herself in their outside pool. Following her death Heinrich moved elsewhere with his father but the villa was kept as moribund mausoleum. Such is the vividness and urgency with which Heinrich describes the villa Stahl, that the images permeate Jeanne's imagination. In an oneiric laden sequence the young couple transcends the *mise-en-scène* of the beach in Portugal and, hand-in-hand, Heinrich guides her around the site of his personal tragedy. When they reach Heinrich's bedroom, which overlooks the pool, they kiss before the scene dissolves back to the beach in Portugal where the kiss continues. However, unbeknownst to Jeanne until much later, Heinrich is lying. In truth he is an unemployable

heating engineer because he does not hold the necessary diploma, and so works part-time at a fast-food chain. Jeanne and Heinrich's relationship is predicated on half-truths and outright lies, but their lies are indicative of that which they truly have in common – the desire to lead a different life.

For Palfreyman, Heinrich's lie and Jeanne's shoplifting is symptomatic of 'one of the contemporary themes of the film – the gulf between the haves and have-nots in post-unification Germany.'²⁹ Heinrich is one of the less fortunate recipients of the 68er-led government's Germany. Not content with his economic lot in life he reconstructs himself as a 'have' for the benefit of Jeanne, granting himself the status symbol of a large villa. The 78er director Petzold, then, would seem to stand in support of the 89ers desire for lifestyle mobility. However, the text retains a degree of ambivalence. The film accepts consumerism as the dominant social reality, even as one that is preferable to Jeanne's situation, but this is tinged with tragedy. Why would Heinrich imagine himself as the son of a wealthy family and then taint this false narrative with the suicide of the mother, going as far as to have her drown the villa's swimming pool, the ultimate symbol of suburban bourgeois wealth.

The 'internal security' of this family on the run – one of the many variations on the possible meaning of the film's title – is paramount. After Jeanne sneaks off to spend the night with her secret boyfriend Heinrich, she is caught by her mother and faces that which every teenager dreads – the parental inquisition. Not only have her parents discovered her relationship, they also discover the stolen clothes which Jeanne stashed under the decking by the pool. For Jeanne, however, such probing takes on a far more serious tone. Feeling anxious and cornered Jeanne asks for a glass of water. Hans says

²⁹ PALFREYMAN, 'The Fourth Generation', p. 21.

‘Das ist ja kein Verhör’ to which Jeanne replies, ‘Doch, ist’s’. Her parents do not want to know if their daughter had sex with this young man and, if so, whether she took precautions. Rather, they only want to know if she has compromised the safety of the family. Forming relationships outside of the family cell and stealing are not viewed negatively by Hans and Clara as an end to themselves, but rather because they risk exposure. The present implications of their past dictates that, even for their daughter, there can be no normality. Furthermore, the scene levels further criticism at the 68er generation more generally by exposing the tyranny of their ideals: Hans is well versed in the ‘fascist’ interrogation tactics of his former opponents and is quite prepared to use them on his own family. Such criticisms were often levelled at the terrorists of the RAF in particular, the ostensibly singular voice which was in fact subject to a strict hierarchy and internal power struggles. The scene also echoes another family ‘discussion’, namely the conversation between Fassbinder and his mother in *Deutschland im Herbst* which also carries the tone of an interrogation and pointed to the Left’s readiness for authoritarian conduct when its ideals are challenged.

Conclusion: breaking the generational bind

Jeanne is ultimately forced to break her parental bind by betraying her family’s true identity to Heinrich. She finally breaks the silence surrounding her family’s past, but at great personal cost. Desperate not to lose Jeanne, Heinrich makes a call to the police that leads to a final confrontation between the terrorists and the state, the implications of which Petzold has expanded upon in interview:

Ein Körper bekämpft die Viren, die ihn befallen haben. Meine Vorstellung war: In einem weißen Auto fahren die als eingedrungener Virus über Autobahnen und Straßen, und die schwarzen Autos, die sich um sie herum gruppieren, sind die

Antikörper, die den Virus eliminieren. [...] Schließlich sollten die schwarzen Autos den Volvo einkreisen und eliminieren, indem sie ihn aus dem Blutkreislauf herauswerfen, was ja am Schluss auch geschieht.³⁰

Petzold's metaphor here is apt, recalling the way in which, as we saw in Chapter 1, the state viewed the RAF as a contaminant so strong that it demanded absolute quarantine for the health of the nation. Furthermore, the notion of the terrorist as a viral infection purposefully links us back to the trope of the vampire. In Murnau's *Nosferatu*, the vampire, surrounded by rats and death, brings the plague with him to Germany. For the state, Hans and Clara's arrival in the Berlin Republic poses a similar threat; they are a virus which threatens the life blood of Germany, its identity, and so are violently expelled from the country's blood flow in the film's climax. The Berlin Republic is unwilling to succumb to a second bite from the terrorism of its predecessor. The family car is catapulted from the road and comes to a stop upside down in a field. Jeanne is thrown from the wreckage but her parents are nowhere to be seen and so we assume that the Volvo fulfils the metaphor of a coffin, becoming the final resting place for Hans and Clara and their worn out ideological convictions. Their time as terrorists had well and truly exhausted itself, their political views anachronistic in the consumer *Spaßgesellschaft* of the new millennium.

The inclusion of the vampire trope in *Die innere Sicherheit* serves, then, a dual seemingly contradictory role. Just as Kathryn Bigelow had used the aesthetics most commonly associated with the western to reinvent the vampire genre in her film, Petzold ascribes vampiric traits to his outlaws in an attempt to resurrect Germany's 'undead' history from the grave, breathing life into that which was otherwise considered to be a

³⁰ KRIEST, 'Im Hinterland des Nihilismus', p. 13.

dead aesthetic phenomenon for filmmakers. In doing so, however, the trope simultaneously underscores the exhaustion of the role played by the terrorist ideology at the end of the 1990s in a society where the ghosts of the past are no longer required to give voice to the victims of the National Socialism. For von Trotta's German sisters terrorism was a symptom of an unmanageable past. Some 20 years later, however, is it nothing but a symptom of itself and, more dangerously, a cause that could, for Petzold at least, threaten the progression of subsequent generations. Petzold's film addresses the legacy of the RAF, perceiving a need to return to a topic which had been decided upon but, in the director's view, clearly not dealt with. As the film draws to a close Jeanne now stands alone, her future uncertain. What is certain is that it is now time both to face the terrorist past not simply as an effect of National Socialism, but as a problem in itself, in order that the nation might truly move on from it and finally embrace the new, now 'normal' republic.

Chapter 6

Making Invisible Memory Visible: Communicative Memory and Taboo in Andres Veiel's *Black Box BRD* (2001)

Beginning its domestic run in May 2001, Andres Veiel's documentary feature *Black Box BRD* (*Black Box FRG*) was greeted with unanimous praise by German critics who regarded the film as a decisive juncture in the discussion of the legacy of the Red Army Faction, not least because, as Marianne Quoirin suggested, 'vielleicht bricht er sogar ein Tabu'.¹ The taboo that Quoirin and her peers referred to centered around the apparent prohibition on discussing the terrorist legacy in anything other than the polarized *Täter/Opfer* binary that had developed as the defining characteristic of the dominant cultural memory of the RAF in Germany. In his own review of Veiel's film the journalist and author Stefan Reinecke (who shares the director's year of birth) recalled the ideological battle-lines of the 1970s which coloured his generation's youth, noting how 'alle Autoritätspersonen – Vater und Lehrer – redeten damals von "Wir" und von "denen."' For Reinecke, an early but intense manifestation of what would become an enduring dichotomy was exemplified during the televised capture of Andreas Baader and Holger Meins in 1972: 'Zu Hause wurden die Kinder vor dem Fernseher versammelt, um anzuschauen, wie Baader und Meins verhaftet wurden. Es gab etwas zu feiern, wie bei der Mondlandung. Der Vater sagte, dass "wir" "die" endlich geschnappt hätten. Ein Triumph. Wir sollten Stolz sein.'² *Black Box BRD* engages this enduring schism through its focus on the dual biographies of a RAF-*Täter*, the lesser known Wolfgang Grams, and a RAF-*Opfer*, Alfred Herrhausen, but rather than vindicating the *Täter/Opfer* binary the

¹ Marianne QUOIRIN, 'Spurensuche mit aktueller Brisanz', *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, 26 May 2001.

² Stefan REINECKE, 'Phantomfeinde', *Tagesspiegel*, 27 May 2001.

film instead works to problematize it. Before we go on to examine how this is achieved, it will first be useful to briefly sketch the backgrounds to Veiel's subjects.

Wolfgang Grams rose to prominence posthumously as one of the key figures of the third generation of the RAF. Born in 1953 to a family of eastern expellees, Grams, like Veiel, belongs to the so-called 'generation of '78' which came of age in the wake of 68er movement. Grams' worldview eventually led him to the vicinity of the RAF and in 1983 he went underground, followed by his girlfriend and fellow terrorist Birgit Hogefeld. Ten years later their location was allegedly betrayed to the authorities by a *Verfassungsschutz* (VS-) spy, Klaus Steinmetz, leading to a fatal confrontation in Bad Kleinen on 26 June 1993. Grams became embroiled in an exchange of fire with *Grenzschutztruppe 9* troops (GSG 9). He was hit several times in the chest and, within three hours, had died of his injuries. A GSG 9 agent, Michael Newrzella, also lost his life during the confrontation. Unlike her boyfriend, Hogefeld did not resist capture, was imprisoned and, at the time of writing, is still serving a sentence for her involvement with the group. Grams was survived by his younger brother Rainer and his parents, Werner and Ruth, who later contested the official ruling on their son's death.³

Alfred Herrhausen, born 1930, was an academically gifted product of the NSDAP's system of *Eliteschulen*, and who later profited from the economic miracle: after a successful turn at the Vereinigte Elektrizitätswerke Westfalen AG (VEW) in Dortmund – where he became company secretary by the tender age of 29 – he subsequently joined the Deutsche Bank in 1969 as a deputy member of the board before

³ Doubt remains over the exact circumstances of Gram's death. For more see Andres VEIEL, *Black Box BRD: Alfred Herrhausen, die Deutsche Bank, die RAF und Wolfgang Grams* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2002), p. 16. See also Butz PETERS *Wer erschoss Wolfgang Grams? Das Desaster von Bad Kleinen* (Berlin: Ullstein 2006); *Bad Kleinen und die Erschießung von Wolfgang Grams* (Berlin: ID-Verlag, 1994).

being elected as its chairman in 1985. Herrhausen remained at the bank until his assassination by the RAF on 30 November 1989, when his corporate Mercedes was exploded by a powerful incendiary device shortly after leaving the family home in Bad Homburg on his daily journey to Frankfurt. His chauffeur, Jakob Nix, survived his injuries, but Herrhausen's wounds were to prove fatal. Herrhausen was survived by his wife Traudl, their daughter Anna, his older daughter Bettina from a previous marriage and his twin sister, Anne.

It is significant to underline that Grams was never linked to the killing of Herrhausen, and neither does Veiel presume to connect the trajectories of Grams and Herrhausen in this way. Rather, Veiel's investigation into the lives of both men is linked only by their opposing, publicly imposed definitions in the enduring, ideologically entrenched discursive struggle over the meaning of the RAF. This chapter examines how *Black Box BRD* readdresses West Germany's terrorist legacy, purposefully exploding the neat separation between perpetrator and victim seen earlier by exposing hidden layers of memory omitted from the official public memory of the RAF which can be read as having aided the transformation of the terrorist legacy into a dominant cultural myth through which the identity of the 'old' Federal Republic could be asserted. In particular, this chapter considers how Veiel, echoing the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst*, takes recourse to the communicative memories of the RAF not be found in public memory, fostered, in this instance, by family and individual memories, in an attempt to challenge the taboo terms of remembrance which followed the legacy of the RAF from the 'German Autumn' into the new millennium. For Veiel there is a far more nuanced

and complicated picture buried beneath the ostensibly resolved real and media history of West German urban terrorism.

The necessity to address such dominant modes of looking at the RAF was not just perceived by Veiel. In a book similarly published to coincide with the commemoration of the 'German Autumn' in 1997, Wolfgang Landgraeber identified what he perceived to be the way in which the RAF and its members often 'mißdeutet werden' in recent filmic responses such as *Todesspiel*, specifically calling for a new generation of filmmakers to address this imbalance: 'Bleibt zu hoffen, daß eine neue Riege von Filmmachern sich mit der nötigen Respektlosigkeit und dennoch ernsthaft an das Thema herantraut und die ihm immer noch anhaftenden Tabus aufbricht.'⁴ Veiel was one such filmmaker. For the director it was precisely this sense of an enduring taboo identified by Landgraeber which had precluded any renewed engagement with the topic of urban terror in the public sphere. Although films such as *Todesspiel* and the television documentary *Im Fadenkreuz: Duetschland und die RAF* engaged the terrorist legacy, they supported the taboo by consolidating enduring cultural terms which themselves implied (false) resolution. As postulated in Chapter 4, we might suggest that filmmakers were warned off the subject 'RAF', not because of its perceived incendiary topicality but, rather, quite the opposite – its political irrelevance. When the ghostly legacy of the past did flare up, it did so in old terms. The revelations about the activist past of Joschka Fischer prompted a media frenzy, the tone of which was more attuned to settling old scores than advancing the debate on left-wing violence as a legitimate means of protest or otherwise. *Black Box BRD*, on the other hand, is engaged in the search for a different perspective on what is already 'known' and largely accepted. In this sense Veiel's film is congruous with the

⁴ LANDGRAEBER, 'Das Thema "Terrorismus" in deutschen Spielfilmen', p.21.

project behind *Deutschland im Herbst*, which sought to present alternative viewpoints on that which was proffered by the media as the 'truth'. However, as we shall consider in due course, Veiel's documentary strategy does also diverge from that of the New German Cinema. Still, even if the RAF was itself considered to be a solved problem, anachronistic and so a political irrelevance by the end of the old millennium, events immediately prior to the release of *Black Box BRD* suggested that the desire to re-approach and re-evaluate this legacy through the optic of the documentary and which might challenge the harmony of established cultural coding still had the power to provoke.

Following the Fischer controversy, and just prior to the domestic release of *Black Box BRD*, the BKA made public the latest findings in the killing of Detlev Karsten Rohwedder by the RAF ten years prior.⁵ Through new DNA-testing technology the BKA placed Grams at the scene of the crime; a hair recovered at the location, it was alleged, belonged to Grams, thus linking him to the killing. The timing of this revelation was imbued with a conspiratorial tone by certain sectors of the left-wing media, the suggestion being that Veiel's film 'auch die Produktion von Nachrichten katalysiert [hat]', to quote Stefan Reinecke.⁶ Ironing out the vagaries of Reinecke's suggestion, Simone Mahrenholz, also of the *Tagesspiegel*, formulated a more direct question to probe the apparent 'Zufall' of the BKA's timing: 'Gilt es, diesen Dokumentarfilm zu verhindern?'⁷ In a slightly more measured reaction at the premiere of *Black Box BRD*, the director himself suggested that 'das auch Zufall sein [kann]', before somewhat wryly

⁵ Detlev Karsten Rohwedder was head of the *Treuhandanstalt* responsible for the privatisation of former GDR assets. He was shot dead by the 'Kommando Ulrich Wessel' of the RAF on April 1 1991.

⁶ REINECKE, 'Phantomfeinde'.

⁷ Simone MAHRENHOLZ, 'Das Politische im Privaten', *Tagesspiegel*, 23 May 2001.

adding: 'BKA und Bundesanwaltschaft stehen da unter großem Erfolgsdruck.'⁸ Clearly, for certain critics at least, the implication was that Veiel's 'Respektlosigkeit', to recall Landgraeber, for the established rules of cultural engagement surrounding the RAF was enough to have triggered the bite reflex of the 1970s; fearing a sympathetic treatment of Grams that might undermine established cultural memory which had been deployed to quarantine, even extinguish, the threat to state identity posed by the RAF, the authorities rallied to fortify the consensual image of the dead terrorist, making sure that he was recognizable foremost to the general public as a murderous *Täter*.

In response to the strengthened criminalization of Grams by the BKA's findings, Veiel stated that:

Nun wird plötzlich wie schon in der Debatte um Joschka Fischer, der Diskurs der siebziger und achtziger Jahre fortgeführt, die Frontenbildung erneuert. Ich dachte, man könne mittlerweile differenzierter über dieses Thema sprechen.⁹

For Veiel the agenda surrounding West Germany's violent past had long since been set; values had been ascribed, which meant that the revelations about Fischer's activist past and the extent of Gram's terrorist credentials only served to redraw old battle lines that were predicated on an incomplete, uneven official public memory. A discussion of *Black Box BRD* illustrates that, as far as Veiel was concerned, the only recourse to this memory imbalance was to return to that aspect of memory which had been largely exorcised from the official record, namely the personal, communicative memories surrounding the RAF, and to which we now turn.

⁸ See Stephan WIEHLER, 'Offene Wunden', *Tagesspiegel*, date unknown. Obtained from the Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

⁹ Andreas PLATTHAUS, 'Zwischen Bad Homburg und Bad Kleinen', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 May 2001.

Communicative memory and *Black Box BRD*:

a) Wolfgang Grams and 'Täterbilder'

How does one begin the task of redressing an apparent memory imbalance to which aspects of the past have been lost? For Aleida Assmann, 'handelt es sich [dabei] um Spuren, Reste, Relikte, Sedimente einer vergangenen Zeit, die zwar noch da sind, aber (vorübergehend) bedeutungslos, *unsichtbar* geworden sind'.¹⁰ Making invisible layers of memory visible can be read as one of the central endeavours of Veiel's film, the process of which breaks down enduring taboos and representational clichés which had followed the discourse on the terrorist legacy from the 'German Autumn' unabated. With *Black Box BRD*, Veiel's recourse to communicative memory attempts to depolarize the victim/perpetrator dichotomy by allowing a RAF-*Täter* and a RAF-*Opfer* to share the frame.

Initially, but unsurprisingly given their deep personal connection, Veiel encountered resistance from the families and friends of both Wolfgang Grams and Alfred Herrhausen when he revealed his intention to make a documentary film about their lives. However, as Veiel recalled in interview, the family of Grams, in particular, saw that the director's project represented a chance to challenge the very structures of cultural remembrance which had seen their son demonized:

Aber Eltern und Bruder Grams haben dann sehr schnell die Chance begriffen, dass dieser Film nicht nur die Leute anspricht, die diese Zeit miterlebt haben, sondern dass er aus dieser begrenzten Zuschauernische herauskommt, in dem er die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik von zwei extremen Polen schildert.¹¹

¹⁰ Aleida ASSMANN, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (München: Beck, 1999), p.409 (my emphasis).

¹¹ Annette SCHÄFER, 'Gespräch mit Andres Veiel', *Black Box BRD Official Website*, 2001 <<http://www.black-box-brd.de/interview.html>> [accessed 2 June 2002]

Above all, the hope of Grams' family was 'dass ihr Sohn und Bruder nicht nur der von den Fahndungsplakaten war, dass ein Mensch *sichtbar* wird'.¹² This loss of image to cultural formation is also made explicit by an interviewee in the film. Matthias Dittmer recalls his last encounter with his friend in 1992 after nearly ten years with little or no contact, suggesting that initially he had difficulty recognising his old friend in the man stood before him because 'ich ihn eigentlich der letzten Jahren nur von Fahndungsplakaten [kannte].' Veiel's decision to reopen a line of dialogue with the terrorist past that would seek to transcend the 'Frontenbildung' of cultural memory meant that, for the director, plotting the medially visible horrors of Grams' terrorist curriculum vitae became superficial: 'Es hat mich bei *Black Box BRD* nicht interessiert, kriminalistisch zu klären, ob Grams eine Batterie gekauft, geschossen hat oder im Libanon war. Er war bei der RAF – das zu wissen reichte mir.'¹³ Furthermore, for the director 'ich hätte es nicht anders gemacht, auch wenn Grams tatsächlich an Rohwedders Ermordung beteiligt gewesen sein sollte',¹⁴ adding that this possibility 'verändert mein Bild von ihm keinen Deut.'¹⁵ We will now move on to examine the nature of this picture of the terrorist that the film generates.

Our introduction to Wolfgang Grams (frequently identified in the film by his nickname of 'Gaks') comes courtesy of Rainer Grams who plots the final minutes of his older brother's life on the otherwise historically innocuous Bad Kleinen train station before the director cuts to a mortuary porter wheeling a coffin into storage, thus underscoring the fatal outcome of Grams' terrorist arc. However, in the next scene

¹² Ibid, (My emphasis).

¹³ Cited in Stefan REINECKE, 'Täterbilder. Opferbilder', *Tagespiegel*, 17 May 2001.

¹⁴ Cited in PLATTHAUS, 'Zwischen Bad Homburg und Bad Kleinen'.

¹⁵ Cited in REINECKE, 'Täterbilder. Opferbilder'.

Wolfgang Grams is resurrected for the spectator. Super-8mm film footage of a family holiday in Spain shows a playful Grams emerge from a half-buried position in the sand. Acting out for the camera, he pretends to be waking from a slumber before shaking the sand off his clothes. Clearly, there is more to be said about the life of Grams beyond the public perception of a terrorist and apparent murderer. Indeed, in this initial, highly personal record of the young Grams the traces of his eventual turn to terror are nowhere to be seen. The original music by Jan Tilman Schade which accompanies the scene works together with the grainy images to evoke the bohemian, avant-garde sensibilities of the late 1960s, and early 1970s; Grams creates his own films within a film, pouring sand through the eye-sockets of a bald doll's head and creating human sculptures with the aid of his brother. The jocular *mise-en-scène* of the home movies evokes youthful idealism and fun.

Veiel's primary source of information in the lives of both men is the communicative memory of their families and closest friends. Through home movies and witness testimony we are brought closer to the individual. In the case of Grams a picture of an idealistic dreamer is foregrounded. The man linked to the murder of Rohwedder was, we find out, in his youth a gifted musician with what his mother proudly describes as 'ein absolutes Gehör'. Troubled by the rampant consumerism in the Federal Republic he chose to buy his clothes in bulk from the Red Cross as a protest against Third World poverty and the perceived capitalist exploitation. This ideological rooted obstinacy was, and remains a source of mild embarrassment for his mother who makes clear that she would have been happy to provide her son's wardrobe, something he rarely allowed. Also, with the conflict in Vietnam still raging Grams, then a conscientious objector.

chose community service with the elderly ahead of military service. Thus, a picture begins to emerge of a single-minded idealist. Roswitha Bleith-Benieck, Gram's girlfriend prior to Hogefeld, fondly remembers her time with Wolfgang. In particular, Roswitha reminisces about young love and snatched sexual liaisons; she recalls that whilst working at the local fish market Grams would steal away to her apartment during his lunch break, and even the smell of fish did not put her off. As we saw in the previous chapter, Christian Petzold was similarly inspired by the few highly personal, even if banal, details about Grams that did emerge from the secretive vacuum of the terrorist underground. Echoing Veiel, it was such details which made clear to the director of *Die innere Sicherheit* that there was more to be said about an apparently closed chapter in the prehistory of the 'new' Federal Republic. That Grams made marmalade and wrote songs for Hogefeld became 'ein Auslöser', allowing him to transcend the deep-rooted media perception of a murderous malcontent, as Petzold himself suggested in interview: 'Da wurde mir klar, dass Terroristen wirkliche Menschen sind.'¹⁶ By exploring the personal aspects hidden behind Gram's public persona, *Black Box BRD* also hopes to act as an 'Auslöser' for the spectator who might come to recognize a more complicated and above all human picture behind the demonisation of the individual.

By airing communicative aspects of the memory of the RAF which had largely remained subordinate to the politicized act of cultural remembrance, Veiel problematizes the dominant cultural perception of the organization in which Wolfgang Grams is reduced to the level of his image on the *Fahndungsplakaten* or his indifferent description in the *Tagesschau*: '33 Jahre alt, 1,80 m groß und spricht hessischen Dialekt. Er hat blaugraue Augen und eine dunkle Hautveränderung neben der Nase.' Through the use of

¹⁶ See PEITZ. 'Nach dem Schiffbruch'.

now dated photo-fit technology, the 15 February, 1987 edition of the news programme *Tagesschau*, included in the film details the ways in which Grams may have changed his appearance to evade capture.¹⁷ The picture of Grams presented in the report is of a man who is ‘dringend verdächtig, sich dem harten Kern der Rote Armee Fraktion angeschlossen zu haben’. The report strengthens his criminalization by the State, reinforcing the media perception of the RAF as a dissident element which is afforded no special political status as terrorist organization, reducing the individual to a cog in the machine of ‘anarchistische Gewalttäter’ as the wanted-posters would have it.

But through the witness testimonies of friends and family the picture of the man behind the accepted perception of the terrorist as necessarily callous and careworn becomes apparent. Grams’ parents, Werner and Ruth, produce a small needle-worked tapestry which is their most prized possession from their son. It depicts a warm climate, with sand, sea, a crocodile and an elephant as well as a hot air balloon passing through the sky. With little else to remind her of her son, for Ruth Grams the tapestry is a precious ‘Erinnerungsstück’. The tapestry’s inclusion in the film proceeds the *Tagesschau* report which, with its cold indifference, or as the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst* might have suggested, its ‘bilderlose Sprachregelung’, reduces Grams to a faceless representative of the RAF, that is, it renders him ‘unsichtbar’.¹⁸ The inclusion of the tapestry serves to counter the *Tagesschau* news report in an attempt to balance out memory, as Veiel suggests:

Die üblichen Stereotypen zeigen verhärtete, verhärmte Typen, die in eisiger Betonsprache reden. Grams war eben nicht so ein Dogmatiker. Er hat den Kontakt

¹⁷ The photo-fit segment of the *Tagesschau* report caused spontaneous laughter in the audience at a public screening that I was present at in 2005.

¹⁸ BRUSTELLIN, ET AL., ‘*Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?*’. p.80.

zu seinen Eltern nie abreißen lassen; sie haben sich auch in der Zeit getroffen, als Grams im Untergrund lebte. [...] So ließ er seinen Eltern in dieser Zeit eine Häkelarbeit zukommen [...].¹⁹

The tapestry as a very personal and precious memory fragment, combined with the direct memories of Wolfgang which it triggers in Ruth Grams, serves to counter the reduction inherent in the news report. However, it is important to note that, for Veiel, this does not equate to overwriting the news report per se. Rather it emphasizes the exercise in balance which the film is trying to initiate. To cite Veiel once more: '[...] die RAF als Handarbeitsgruppe. Das steht *neben* Grams Überzeugung, dass der Staat potenziell faschistisch ist und von daher die Ermordung seiner Repräsentanten gerechtfertigt sei.'²⁰ Veiel is not trying to supplant the official public memory of the RAF. Rather his film aims to act as a discursive bridge which will restore the missing aspects of communicative memory to the cultural memory of the RAF, in order to produce a more complete picture. Veiel might not dwell on the details of Gram's terrorist activity, but he is not ignorant of the fatal implications of his world view for others. After all, Wolfgang Grams *was* a member of the RAF, radicalized to the extent that he thought it permissible to take a life in the name of the group's beliefs whether he put his ideas in to practice or not.

As noted above, although the director asserts that the fact of Gram's involvement with the RAF is all one needs to know, he does not shy away from the radicalized side of his subject, with witness testimony from former *Wohngemeinschaft* comrades offering perspectives on Grams' radicalization. Most notably, Grams' best friend, Gerd Böh,

¹⁹ Birgit GLOMBITZA, 'Reden über die Opfer RAF'. *Berliner Zeitung*, 31 May 2001.

²⁰ *Ibid* (my emphasis).

although he did not follow Grams to the RAF, tries to explain their perspective on the taking of life:

Moralisch gesehen hatten wir kein Problem mit einem Attentat oder einer Hinrichtung, weil wir gesagt haben, in der Dritten Welt werden Millionen Menschen getötet durch Ausbeutung, Hunger, Armut. Deshalb ist es ein legitimes Mittel, dafür Verantwortliche hier zu Rechtschaft zu ziehen.

Under the 'Verantwortliche' Böh cites 'die Repräsentanten aus Wirtschaft, Staat und Politik'. Of course, Alfred Herrhausen fell victim to the RAF's legitimization of violence. Whereas *Deutschland im Herbst* struggled to embed an alternative memory of the 'German Autumn' into the collective consciousness which might challenge official memory, *Black Box BRD* is concerned with creating a balance within public memory. As we have seen, following the media blackout surrounding the events of the 'German Autumn' the State privileged its own perspective and so only allowed room for the victims within its officially sanctioned discourse on the RAF. As a result the exercise in counter-memory which constitutes *Deutschland im Herbst*, while not exonerating terrorist violence, was working almost exclusively to allow the voices of the perpetrators and their sympathisers to be heard, and so scant room was given to the victims of the group or the perspective of the State. However, it is in this regard that the Veiel asserts that '*Black Box BRD* ist ein Film über die Gegenwart', and stressing: 'Man kann nicht über die RAF sprechen ohne Raum für die Opfer zu lassen.'²¹

b) Alfred Herrhausen and 'Opferbilder'

Black Box BRD is not engaged solely in problematizing the cultural myth of the 'German Autumn' espoused by the state. The film also works to problematize the RAF's terms of

²¹ SCHÄFER, 'Gespräch mit Andres Veiel'.

representation, itself a source of self-regulating mythology which saw the humanity drained from the group's victims in equal parts, and a brief investigation of which will aid our subsequent discussion of Veiel's own representational strategy. Speaking about the increase in terrorist autobiographies since the 1990s, Julian Preece suggests that 'RAF memoirs are of limited value in other respects because their authors are unable to reflect critically on their past.'²² As much as the state-driven public memory of the RAF is predicated on the ideological schism of the 1970s, many former RAF members and sympathisers, such as Gerd Böh, might still be considered prisoners of this past also. As our discussion in the previous chapter shows, one need only look to Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* for a filmic enactment of this tendency and the threat that it also poses to escaping the ideologically fraught cachet of violence which characterized the 'old' Federal Republic in the 1970s. In this context Preece posits the former *Bewegung 2. Juni* and subsequent RAF-member Inge Viett as an example. Referring to her autobiography *Nie war ich furchtloser* (1997), Preece notes how 'Viett has no moral insight into her actions; she stands her ground and regrets nothing.'²³ The question of moral insight and self-critical appraisal recently became the sticking-point in a public debate on the question of forgiveness, with the issue of remorse standing at the centre of a series of sentence reviews for the longest serving RAF prisoners.

In early 2007, second-generation RAF commando Christian Klar – serving 26 years for 9 murders and 11 attempted murders and scheduled for release in 2009 – appealed to Germany's serving *Bundespräsident* Horst Köhler for pardon, followed shortly after by Grams' erstwhile lover Birgit Hogefeld (due for release in 2011). Klar's

²² Julian PREECE, 'Between Identification and Documentation, "Autofiction" and "Biopic": The Lives of the RAF, *German Life and Letters*, 56:4 (2003), pp. 363-76 (363).

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

plea was complicated by the media's re-playing of an earlier television interview with Günter Gauss in 2001 in which, when asked about the question of remorse for his victims, Klar had still maintained: 'In dem politischen Raum, vor dem Hintergrund von unserem Kampf sind das keine Begriffe.'²⁴ Even though the former RAF member had written privately to the former *Bundespräsident* in 2003 claiming: 'Selbstverständlich muss ich eine Schuld anerkennen. Ich verstehe die Gefühle der Opfer und bedauere das Leid dieser Menschen', in 2007 it was felt that he had not done enough to publicly distance himself from his deeds and so his plea was rejected.²⁵

But at the same time, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, who had not requested a pardon, was paroled for early release from Aichach prison in Bavaria. Mohnhaupt had made no move to show remorse for her past, whether privately or publicly. As the British broadsheet *The Independent* reported, her early release was determined on the grounds that 'this is not a pardon but a decision based on specific legal considerations,' namely that the convicted terrorist no longer posed a threat to society.²⁶ Criticism of the court's decision to release Mohnhaupt came from the families of RAF victims with the murdered industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer's son, Joerg, complaining about this apparent act of clemency in spite of her unwillingness to acknowledge her victims. In May of 2007 Mohnhaupt walked free nonetheless. However, following the example of Klar, Birgit Hogeferd's

²⁴ The interview originally aired on 22 November 2001 but was re-screened to coincide with the debate that Klar's request provoke in February 2007. For more, see, for example, Philipp WITTROCK, 'Doku-drama hinter Gittern', *Spiegel online*, 01 February 2007.

<<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,463562,00.html>> [accessed on 12 February 2007]. See also, Tom SCHIMMECK, 'Die RAF auf der Couch', *profil*, 20, 14 May 2007.

²⁵ See Philipp WITTROCK, 'Keine Gnade für Klar und Hogeferd', *Spiegel online*, 7 May 2007

<<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,466884,00.html>> [accessed on 13 May 2007]

²⁶ Tony PATERSON, 'Red Army Killer Freed after 25 Years in Prison', *The Independent*, 13 February 2007.

request for an early pardon was similarly refused, a decision which Andres Veiel found regretful and for reasons that are interesting for his filmic strategy.

In preparation for *Black Box BRD*, Veiel had conducted extensive interviews with Hogefeld in prison and had hoped that she would feature in the film as one of his interlocutors. Veiel was drawn to Hogefeld not just because of her obvious proximity to Grams, but because of the details of her own biography, namely the willingness she had shown to reflect critically on her past. Unlike Klar who, in Tony Paterson's estimation, still 'appeared a bewildered individual locked in left-wing guerilla ideology' in 2007, Hogefeld had acknowledged the fatal outcome of her past much earlier.²⁷ In response to her refused plea for clemency, Veiel stated:

Ich bedaure das sehr, denn sie war eine der ersten in der RAF, die bereits kurz nach ihrer Festnahme begonnen hat, radikal mit dem eigenen Tun abzurechnen. Sie hat sehr früh "Ich" gesagt, während Christian Klar noch sehr lange am kollektiven "Wir" festhielt. Während ihres Prozesses hat sie die Taten der RAF, auch den ihr vorgeworfenen Mord am amerikanischen Soldaten Pimental, als "grauenvoll" beschrieben; den Anschlag auf die US-Airbase nannte sie "zutiefst unmenschlich" und sprach von einem Irrweg.²⁸

Hogefeld's recognition 'von einem Irrweg' ran contrary to the trend identified by Wolfgang Deuschl – the governor of Aichach where Mohnhaupt resided – who was unsurprised by the reluctance of RAF members to expiate guilt. For Deuschl, Mohnhaupt 'committed crimes when she was still young, then she was arrested, freed, went underground and spent another 20-plus years in jail... You can hardly expect her to say: "Everything I have done in my life was rubbish."' ²⁹ As such, the interest Hogefeld held

²⁷ PATERSON, 'Red Army Killer Freed after 25 Years in Prison'.

²⁸ Quoted in Christiane PEITZ, 'Deutscher Beton', *Tagesspiegel Online*, 10 May 2007 <<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/;art772,433549>> [accessed 22 May 2007] (para. 1 of 8).

²⁹ Cited in PATERSON, 'Red Army Faction Killer Freed after 24 Years in Prison'.

for Veiel is hardly surprising given the early willingness to reckon with her past and, above all, recognize that human dimension beneath the apparent character masks of the people the group killed. Nonetheless, the director's wish that Hogefeld appear in the film went unfulfilled. Although Hogefeld had broken from the closed ranks of the RAF collective and rediscovered her own voice, in many other ways she was still a prisoner, when not a willing practitioner, of the ideological schism of the seventies; although she had recognized the humanity in her erstwhile opponents she was unwilling to participate in a film about Grams which also included a focus on Herrhausen. Even without Hogefeld's input, *Black Box BRD* is invested in innovating the dichotomized cultural paradigm surrounding the legacy of urban terrorism from both sides of the ideological rupture.

Initially, it would seem that Veiel is in fact guilty of privileging the memory of the *Täter* over that of the *Opfer*, since in the first half of the film Wolfgang Grams is brought closest to the spectator. Alfred Herrhausen, on the other hand, is less visible, that is to say he seems to be depicted in the terms that the RAF viewed him, as a faceless functionary of the Deutsche Bank, or 'Der Herr des Geldes' as *Der Spiegel* christened him.³⁰ Initially at least, Herrhausen appears as a throwback to the NS past, exuding the credentials which informed the RAF's violent critique of West German society: a Nazi *Eliteschüler* and subsequent product of the economic miracle of the 1950s who rose to prominence through the work ethic and ambition instilled in him by his father.³¹ The highly-driven Herrhausen was later accused of lacking 'menschliche Wärme' in his relationship with his colleagues at the bank. However, when the personal aspects of

³⁰ *Der Spiegel*, 11, 13 March 1989.

³¹ Herrhausen's twin sister Anne recalls their father's words: 'wenn man etwas erreichen will, muss man immer mindestens eine Stunde mehr arbeiten als die Massen.'

Grams' life become less distinct as he approaches the terrorist underground, the human dimension of Herrhausen's biography comes to the fore, not least through the recollections of his wife Traudl and a brief yet emotive entry by his daughter Anna. We discover that 'der Herr des Geldes', rather than being a presumed authoritarian father and workaholic, was comforted by the noise of his daughter and her friends playing in the house when he was working from home. Furthermore, the film exposes an ironic tragedy at the centre of Herrhausen's assassination by the RAF. The man the RAF viewed as a chief representative of *Konsumterror* had, in his final days, been working to relieve Third World debt. His plan was considered to be so out of touch by his co-workers at the bank that he found himself increasingly isolated and contemplated his resignation up to the day that he was assassinated. Traudl Herrhausen remembers her final words to her husband on the day of his death in which she suggested that his plans were perhaps too rapid, that the others needed time to catch up, and then his reply: 'wenn sogar du das nicht mitträgst, wenn sogar du zweifelst, wenn sogar du mich verlässt, dann weiß ich nicht, wie das weitergehen soll.'

Traudl Herrhausen's ardent memory of her husband's equally emphatic response exposes the guilt she still feels for having contributed to her husband's sense of isolation before his assassination. Her considered reflection on the events leading up to her husband's death show that the man the RAF put to death was, foremost, a husband and father, and not simply a character mask of the Deutsche Bank. The personal picture of both men which Veiel builds exposes the inadequacy of thinking in polarized terms. In the case of the victim, as well as the perpetrator, the personal aspects of their lives cannot be ignored, something which Gerd Böh attempts to justify:

Wenn ich mir vorstelle, wie die RAF jetzt jemanden beobachtet hat, dass sie das natürlich mitgekriegt haben, das persönliche Leben von jemandem. Was es bestimmt nicht leichter macht. Da muss man dann einfach darüber hinwegsehen und denjenigen nur in der Funktion sehen.

At this point the director enters the frame through his edit to create a dialogue with the victim that Böh is not capable of. Veiel exposes the reduction inherent in such a remark by cutting back to Traudl Herrhausen immediately after Böh's statement where she contemplates the meaning that the birth of her daughter with Alfred Herrhausen brought to their lives. Born shortly after the Schleyer kidnapping, which prompted Alfred Herrhausen to write a statement declaring that the 'demokratische Rechtsstaat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland' should not negotiate with the terrorists in the event of his kidnapping, their daughter Anna brought stability into their turbulent lives, as Traudl Herrhausen recalls: 'und dann hatte das Leben erst recht einen Sinn.' The man the RAF put to death was, above all, a loving father and husband and far more than the sum of his corporate parts. By reconstituting communicative aspects of memory within the cultural memory of the RAF, *Black Box BRD* challenges the polarized cultural mode of remembrance in which discursive values had long since been 'entschieden', to cite Veiel once more.³² By setting the lives of a RAF-*Täter* and a RAF-*Opfer* against one another Veiel at once breaks down the taboo structures of the victim/perpetrator dichotomy and works to produce a more balanced act of cultural remembrance. As Veiel suggests, with *Black Box BRD*, 'Ich wollte raus aus den Ideologie-Gräben der siebziger und achtziger Jahre', which had followed the discourse of the RAF from the 'old' Federal Republic into

³² HAUSER and SCHROTH, 'Das Thema ist erledigt', 44.

the Berlin Republic of the new millennium in the form of 'ein Rückfall': 'Jetzt wird man wieder in blanken Täter-Opfer-Kategorien denken, und in sonst nichts.'³³

For the author Leander Scholz, Veiel's refusal to adopt a position sees the film strive for 'eine Aussöhnung mit einem Stück deutscher Vergangenheit'. But although, as Scholz also suggests, *Black Box BRD* is indeed 'ein Meisterwerk an Ausgewogenheit', does this necessarily also imply a reconciliatory tone with regard to West Germany's terrorist past?³⁴ Veiel certainly demonstrates, somewhat unexpectedly, that Wolfgang Grams and Alfred Herrhausen actually had a good deal in common. Although they followed different paths the film presents a picture of two men who were both uncompromising idealists and so became increasingly isolated due to their convictions. Linked by the plight of the Third World, 'the film tentatively suggests in its juxtapositions', as Rachel Palfreyman remarks, 'that the two men need not have necessarily been enemies.'³⁵ But although the film transcends the dominant cultural modes of approaching both *Täter* and *Opfer*, their biographies are by no means reconciled. Rather, as Martina Knoblen comments, the very strength of Veiel's film was that 'er keine falschen Wahrheit suggeriert und keinen Frieden vorgaukelt.'³⁶

Here one might make mention of the film's title. The literal implication of a 'black box' is the flight recorder that preserves the final moments before a disaster and which might shed light on fatal events. In a sense, Veiel's film does function as the 'old' Federal Republic's 'black box' by replaying the final moments in the life of Herrhausen. But the film poses more questions than it answers. As the credits roll we are no closer to

³³ REINECKE, 'Täterbilder, Opferbilder'.

³⁴ Leander SCHOLZ, 'Die Politik des Erinnerens', *Freitag*, 14 March 2003 <<http://www.freitag.de/2003/12/03121501.php>> [accessed on 23 April 2004]

³⁵ PALFREYMAN, 'The Fourth Generation', pp. 28-29.

³⁶ Martina KNOBLEN, 'Black Box BRD', *epd Film XVIII* (2001) 6, pp. 46-7 (47).

discovering the 'truth' behind the disputed facts of Gram's death, nor does the film suggest resolution or harmony, thus further refuting Scholz's notion of reconciliation. For the director the title is also to be understood in terms closer to his cinematic roots: 'Black Box ist aber auch der schwarze Kasten im Sinn der Projektionsbox, in den wir alles hinein projizieren können, was wir kennen und glauben.'³⁷ Interestingly, such a description resonates with our discussion of cultural memory which might also be understood in terms of a projection box but, as we have considered throughout this study, oftentimes a closed space of representation into which the projections of hegemonic 'truths' are privileged. Although Veiel's 'Black Box' does not pertain to hold any more satisfactory answers to a period dubbed by the filmmakers of the New German Cinema as the 'history of confusion', it nonetheless succeeds in shedding light on alternative perspectives, or in the words of Veiel: 'Ich mache nur Angebote mit meinem Film, und die Projektionsfläche in diesem Kasten ist groß genug für verschiedene Vorstellungen.'³⁸

By subverting the *Täter/Opfer* binary and the cultural implications that come with it, *Black Box BRD* exposes the dangers identified by Aleida Assmann as inherent in the transmission of memories from the communicative to the cultural phase of memory:

Der Übergang vom lebendigen individuellen zum künstlichen kulturellen Gedächtnis ist allerdings problematisch, weil er die Gefahr der Verzerrung, der Reduktion, der Instrumentalisierung von Erinnerung mit sich bringt. Solche Verengungen und Verhärtungen können nur durch öffentliche begleitende Kritik, Reflexion und Diskussion aufgefangen werden.³⁹

Ruth Grams' constant attempts 'das Bild zu deuten', in the case of her son's tapestry echo the task of the spectator who, through the course of the film, is similarly presented with a

³⁷ SCHÄFER, 'Gespräch mit Andres Veiel'

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ A. ASSMANN, *Erinnerungsräume*, p. 15.

woven tapestry of witness testimony out of which he/she is required to infer meaning. These very personal labours of memory sit at odds with the representational clichés that dominate the cultural memory of the RAF, prompting the very reflection, discussion and critique which Assmann calls for.

Der Versuch, eine Geschichte für sich zu retten?: The 78ers and the RAF

Through his recourse to direct experience Veiel attempts to strike a balance between the public, polarized cultural memory of the terrorist past and private communicative memory as already noted. The failure to recognize the 'direct' memory of experience in the aftermath of the 'German Autumn' arguably resulted in an abstraction in which the terrorist past was shaped into a foundational myth expressed in polarized cultural terms, terms that Veiel eschews in favour of the personal, family memories of the 'terrorist' and 'capitalist', which expose a human factor that would have been anathema to those on either side of the ideological divide in the 70s and 80s who failed to see the slightest spark of humanity reflected in their opponents. As such, this film could not have been made during the peak of the New German Cinema which coincided with the height of terrorist activity. By 1997 however, although the long since entrenched *Täter/Opfer* binary continued to hold a monopoly over the way in which the RAF was remembered, temporal distance from the events of the 'German Autumn' meant that the reactionary political climate surrounding the RAF had thawed (to extend the metaphor posited by the filmmakers of the New German Cinema) to the extent that it was now permissible to challenge the taboo by airing the communicative memories of family and friends in an attempt to bring the debate further and not just, as in the example of *Todesspiel*, confirm the established binary coding associated with the dominant cultural memory of the RAF.

the filmic strategy of which implied completion, resolution and truth. With the passage of time and the prominence of subsequent generations not so emotionally involved with the events of 1977 Veiel's recourse to personal, family memory and his refusal to 'take sides' became acceptable to cinema audiences.

Certainly, for Martina Knoblen the very strength of Veiel's film was that 'er keine falschen Wahrheiten suggeriert und keinen Frieden vorgaukelt.'⁴⁰ However, although the director refuses to adopt a position in relation to the lives of either man there is evidence of a wider agenda. By turning to the communicative aspect of the memory of the RAF, Veiel does not just balance out the apparent imbalance in the cultural memory of the recent past; he also initiates an act of generational restitution. At a screening of *Black Box BRD* for its domestic audience the film critic Ulrich Kriest pondered:

Ob es sein könnte, [...] dass hier die Generation der Vierzigjährigen versuche, eine Geschichte für sich zu retten und zu erkunden, die einerseits von einem Staatsfernsehen der allzu klaren und fertigen Antworten erzählt und andererseits von einer jungen Popkultur auf der Suche nach Fashionelementen, radikalem Chic und Schockwerten abgegrast werde.⁴¹

Veiel's strategy serves to challenge the dominant cultural myth of the RAF as well as the very recent repackaging of the RAF as a publicly commodifiable myth at the hands of post-ideological pop culture which has reduced the RAF to the level of fashionable signs and symbols which favour style over substance, most notably in the example of the 'Prada-Meinhof' clothing line. As such, through its privileging of personal memory *Black Box BRD* can be read as a rescue mission for the memory of Veiel's generation: born in

⁴⁰ KNOBEN, 'Black Box BRD', p. 47.

⁴¹ See Thomas KLINGENMAIER. 'Gefühl contra Verstand', *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 19 May 2001.

1959, Veiel belongs to the same generation as Wolfgang Grams (b. 1953) and with *Black Box BRD* Veiel is asking what the parameters of this generation were.

Veiel's return to the communicative, private memories of the RAF is, perhaps, not that surprising. When writing about filmic responses to terrorism in light of the twentieth anniversary of the German Autumn, specifically *Die bleierne Zeit*, Landgraeber also notes:

Trottas Film hat man, wenn ich mich recht erinnere, in Rezensionen eine angeblich zu privatistische Sicht des Themas 'Terrorismus' vorgeworfen. Aus der Distanz von sechzehn Jahren und in der Gesamtschau [...] erscheint diese vermeintliche Schwäche eher als Stärke.⁴²

Veiel's privileging of private memory over official public memory reassesses the terrorist past but without demonizing *or* valorizing the RAF or its victims. Whereas films such as *Todesspiel* served only to consolidate established polarized cultural modes of remembrance, *Black Box BRD* creates a truly discursive space. The tag line to the film aptly stated that 'Der Kampf ist vorbei, die Wunden sind offen', underlining that, far from being a closed chapter in the history of the Federal Republic, the terrorist past still needs to be worked through. By balancing public and private memory, Veiel opens up a dialogue with the past through which such a task can be achieved. As the director explained to me in interview, the film aimed to represent:

Den Versuch zumindest zu wagen, die Diskussion, die in Deutschland seit den 70er Jahren nur polarisiert gelaufen ist, eben durch diese Juxtaposition von Täterseite und Opferseite zu erweitern, um ein Gesamtbild dieses, wenn man so will, historischen Abbilds oder Versuchs einer Beschreibung der 70er und 80er Jahre der Polarisierung zu leisten und gleichzeitig die Polarisierung insofern

⁴² LANDGRAEBER, 'Das Thema "Terrorismus" in deutschen Spielfilmen', p.18.

aufheben, dass sich beide Seiten in einen Film hineinbringe und gegeneinandersetze.⁴³

With this achieved, perhaps the work on the legacy of the RAF can begin in earnest. As Andres Veiel suggested at the domestic premiere of *Black Box BRD*, 'die Arbeit der Auseinandersetzen beginnt erst'.⁴⁴

⁴³ Chris HOMEWOOD, *Interview with Andres Veiel* in Cardiff, 16 September 2005. (Unpublished)

⁴⁴ WIEHLER, 'Offene Wunden'.

Chapter 7

‘Die heitere Zeit’? Terrorism, Pop and Unification in *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* (2000)

Up until now we have been looking at films which have responded largely to the dominant cultural memory of the RAF. In the final chapters of this study, however, we now turn our attention to two texts, Volker Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* and Hans Weingartner's *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, which, although they do not lose sight of this paradigm, take the re-mythologisation of the RAF prevalent in recent youth culture as their point of departure for an examination of the terrorist legacy. Furthermore, both filmmakers broaden their scope; their films are as much concerned with the wider legacy of '68 and what they view as its possible value for the present than just the terrorism that followed in its wake, and which, as we have seen, has been increasingly deployed to discredit the positive vestiges of the protest generation's bequest to the new Germany. Widely attacked as a harmful *westalgie* celebration of the terrorist past or throw-away piece of 'RAF-pop', I suggest that while *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* engages nostalgia for aspects of the 'old' Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), it does so in an attempt to reflect critically on both the past and the present, pointing to the erosion of utopian idealism on both sides of the iron curtain and lamenting the outcome, namely the perceived loss of any kind of sustainable ideology in post-unification Germany in favour of rampant consumerism.

Directed by returning West German filmmaker Schlöndorff, and co-written with Wolfgang Kohlhaase, perhaps the most prolific screenwriter of the former East

German *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (DEFA),¹ *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* (*The Legends of Rita*) follows the story of Rita Vogt, a young idealist whose desire to reform West German society has since led her into the vicinity of an unnamed terrorist cell. Following the rash jail-break of her lover and leader of the group Andi, in which a lawyer is fatally wounded, Rita uses her chance contact with the East German *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (MfS), or Stasi, to provide an escape route for herself and her comrades who are now at the top of the West German authorities' most-wanted list. From the temporary safety offered by the GDR the group travels to France, where Rita's idealism is confronted with the fatal reality of her terrorist trajectory; after attracting the attention of the local authorities she shoots a policeman dead. Rita escapes to the GDR once more and makes the decision to remain and start a new life in what she takes to be the 'better German state'. However, the ease with which Rita is able to escape the site of her crimes belies their importunity, and so even with the aid of her sympathetic Stasi 'carers' she must twice assume a new identity when her terrorist past catches up with her, relentlessly frustrating her attempts to start afresh: she is forced to reject both an unconventional potential lover, Tatjana, and then a conventional fiancé, Jochen. The final blow for Rita is the collapse of Soviet and Eastern European communism: the fall of the Berlin Wall – which for Rita had truly served its intended function as a 'Schutzmauer' – erodes the division between East and West which had furnished Rita with a degree of safety, thus leaving her with nowhere left to run. In a final desperate gesture Rita reverts to her original identity and tries to return to the West, but she is gunned down at a checkpoint before she can cross the border.

¹ For more on DEFA and its output see, for example. Seán ALLAN and John SANDFORD, *DEFA: East German Cinema, 1946-1992* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 1999) and Daniela BERGHAIN, *Hollywood Behind the Wall: The Cinema of East Germany* (Manchester Uni. Press: Manchester, 2005).

Die Stille nach dem Schuss also sees its director, the former 68er Schlöndorff, return to the site of his past, revisiting the topic of urban terrorism which had dominated the socio-political consciousness of the 'old' Federal Republic in the 1970s, prompting a sustained response from the filmmakers of the New German Cinema in the second half of the decade. We have already considered Schlöndorff's contribution to the omnibus film *Deutschland im Herbst* in direct response to the events of the 'German Autumn', but in 1975 the director, in collaboration with von Trotta, had already released *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*, a filmic adaptation of Heinrich Böll's novella, albeit with an abbreviated title for the cinemas. A brief consideration of Schlöndorff's first cinematic response to urban terror will help to prefigure our discussion of the filmmaker's return to the topic post-unification.

'Als Pamphlet und als Waffe im Kampf gedreht': *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*, and the critical response to *Die Stille nach dem Schuss*²

Although the investigatory subtitle of Böll's novella – *wie Gewalt entstehen und wohin sie führen kann* – was absent from the cinema posters, the brutalization of the idealistically and politically naïve Katharina at the hands of the media and the police remained a central element of Schlöndorff's filmic adaptation of *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*. After Katharina offers refuge to, and falls in love with Ludwig Götten, a terror suspect, she is subjected to a smear campaign by the fictional tabloid, *Die Zeitung*,³ and is relentlessly trailed by the police, who, as well as colluding with

² For more detailed discussions of *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* see, for example, Richard W. KILBORN, 'A study of the Film Adaptation of Böll's *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*', *Scottish Papers in Germanic Studies* Vol. 4 (1984); Anna K. KUHN, 'Schlöndorff's *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*. Melodrama und Tendenz', in Sigrid BAUSCHINGER, Susan L. COCALIS and Henry A. LEA (eds.) *Film und Literatur: Literarische Texte und der neue deutsche Film* (Bern und München: Francke Verlag), pp. 86-105; Hans-Bernard MOELLER and George LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema: Adaptation, Politics, and the "Movie-Appropriate"* (Southern Illinois Uni. Press: Carbondale and Edwardsville, 2002), in particular pp. 128-43; Jack ZIPES, 'The political Dimension of *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*', in Terri GINSBERG and Kirsten Moana THOMPSON (eds.) *Perspectives on German Cinema*, (New York: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 403-12.

³ The fictional distance between 'Die Zeitung' and its real-life model *Bild* is purposefully undermined by a non-diegetic intertitle at the film's narrative conclusion.

the media, are equally aggressive in their handling of the suspected sympathiser. The newspaper's leading reporter, Tötges, is the chief architect of Katharina's public image, depicting her as a fervent communist and morally bankrupt gangster's moll. This carefully constructed public image has devastating consequences on Katharina who, in reality, is a painfully private individual (nicknamed 'die Nonne' by her friends) and diligent worker. Indeed, Katharina is a consummate product of the 'economic miracle' and thus, in a fatal irony, an exemplary proponent of many of the values which the police and media perceive her to threaten. Her sense of identity fractured, Katharina first turns on herself, destroying the modern flat that she had worked so hard to attain, before shooting the unscrupulous Tötges.

The articulation of Schlöndorff's leftist political commitment in *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* is far from subtle. In a film which demonstrates 'an obvious tendency to polarize strictly between good and evil, with very few grey areas in between,' as Stefan Wolff observes, audience identification is drawn towards the sympathetic Katharina and diverted from her persecutors.⁴ *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* employs the seductive art of melodrama to reinforce its own propagandist counter agenda: terrorism is not on trial, but rather the destabilizing potential of what the film judges to be the state's overdetermined response to the problem, specifically 'the everyday terrorism of institutions [...], the combined machinery of the press, of the judiciary, of the police administration and, formed by them, public opinion', to quote the director.⁵

⁴ Stefan WOLFF, 'The Fictionalisation of Terrorism in West German Cinema', in Diana HOLMES and Alison SMITH (eds.) *100 Years of European Cinema. Entertainment or Ideology* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 120-130 (121).

⁵ Cited in KILBORN, 'A study of the Film Adaptation of Böll's *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*', p. 45.

Made in the director's words 'als Pamphlet und als Waffe im Kampf'⁶ against the political developments of the seventies, the film pursues its own counter-propagandistic agenda. As Anna Kuhn notes, throughout the film 'manipuliert der Regisseur die filmischen Mittel (wie close-up oder point-of-view shot), so daß die Identifikation zwischen Zuschauer und gepeinigter Heldin geradezu unvermeidbar wird.' Indeed, the filmic pursuit of Katharina is manipulated in such a way that her eventual 'Mord an Tötges schließlich als verständlich, als gerechtfertigt, ja als gerecht erscheint', to return to Kuhn.⁷ For critics such as Jack Zipes, however, Schlöndorff's use of melodrama defeats itself in so much as it 'actually reproduces the patterns of domination and struggle and conditions of a market commodity where monopoly rules' by oppressively colonizing the spectator's perspective on events.⁸ This might be the case, but as Kuhn makes clear, 'doch wie der Boulevard-Journalismus, so ist auch dieses Melodrama äußerst wirkungsvoll.'⁹ Released amidst the growing hysteria surrounding RAF-sympathisers, but before the socio-politically destabilizing effects of terrorism had reached their zenith, *Die verlorene Katharina Blum* acts as a prologue to the terrorism films that responded to the aftermath of the 'German Autumn', intervening in the discursive struggle on terrorism which the state would successfully instrumentalise in support of its cultural myth of national solidarity.¹⁰ In this regard, 'the positive response of the West German public to the film', as Hans-Bernard Moeller and George Lellis remark, 'was all the more remarkable because it was overtly political.'¹¹ Its inflammatory themes notwithstanding, *Die verlorene Ehre*

⁶ BD, 'Eine unguete deutsche Liason', *Kölner Stadtanzeiger*, 16 September 2000.

⁷ KUHN, 'Schlöndorff's *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*', p. 86.

⁸ ZIPES, 'The Political Dimension of *The lost Honour of Katharina Blum*', p. 410.

⁹ KUHN, 'Schlöndorff's *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*', p. 100.

¹⁰ Schlöndorff comments that given the rapid increase in terrorist hysteria and the destabilization of West German society following the film's release in 1975, had the film been made later it would have reflected an even more intense reaction by the media and police. See, 'Interview with Volker Schlöndorff' on the Criterion Collection DVD release of *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* (2003).

¹¹ MOELLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 129.

der Katharina Blum was a commercial hit both at home and abroad and, making the top fifty of the 100 most significant German films.¹²

Nearly thirty years later however, Schlöndorff's return to the topic of terrorism was greeted with a rather more tepid critical and public reception. Despite an initially favourable reception at the *Berlinale* in 2000¹³ and remarks in some quarters that, in terms of craftsmanship at least, *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* marked a 'return to form' after the critically disastrous *Palmetto*,¹⁴ outside of the hermetic festival circuit critical dissent was quickly voiced. The criticism which had plagued Margarethe von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit* in the early-1980s was heard again, with domestic film critics struggling to locate the motivational pull that had drawn Rita to the underground with any degree of satisfaction: Helmut Ziegler, to name but one, saw this as a distinct problem, complaining that although the first third of the film is preoccupied with terrorist activity in the former West German state, 'wird die Motivation von Rita Vogt, ein solches Leben zu führen, nicht wirklich klar.'¹⁵ Thus with no loss of irony, Schlöndorff suggested that the critics actually look to von Trotta's critically beleaguered film for this missing context, maintaining that *Die bleierne Zeit* 'was really the first part to *The Legends of Rita*. That would be the beginning when Rita was still active. And now is when she has the possibility to live a totally new life, with a new identity. So this story is really the closing chapter to *Marianne and Juliane*.'¹⁶

However, this did little to stem the tide of critical disenchantment.

¹² Thomas Elsaesser also notes the film's success; see ELSAESSER, *The New German Cinema*, p. 37. *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* ranked forty-ninth in the film 1995 poll. See Egon JACOBSON, 'Die 100 wichtigsten deutschen Filme', *SKD Newsletter* (Deutsche Kinemathek) 5 November 1995, pp. 61-63.

¹³ The film was awarded the coveted Blauer Engel award for best European film, with both Bibiana Beglau (Rita) and Nadja Uhl (Tatjana) sharing the Silver Bear for best actress.

¹⁴ See MOLLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 309.

¹⁵ Helmut ZIEGLER, 'Man kann das so oder so erzählen', *Die Woche*, 14 September 2000.

¹⁶ Prairie MILLER, 'An Interview with German Filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff', *World Socialist Web Site*, 13 February 2001 <www.wsws.org/articles/2001/feb2001/schl-f03_pm.shtml> [accessed 13 July 2004].

Perhaps the most scathing critic on the subject was the former *Bewegung 2. Juni* and then RAF member Inge Viett, whose aforementioned biography, *Nie war ich furchtloser*, serves as a historically recognisable source for Schlöndorff and Kohlhaase's fictionalized recreation of the past.¹⁷ Viett publicly criticized the lack of any historically grounded motivating factors or social context behind terrorism in the film as 'denunziatorisch' and 'verantwortungslos' on the part of the filmmakers.¹⁸ Although perhaps, in part, angered by the feeling that 'Schlöndorff meine Lebensgeschichte geplündert [hat], ohne die Stoffrechte zu erwerben' in the creation of his fictionalized narrative, this line of attack was by no means limited to Viett.¹⁹ For Ziegler and Viett, Rita's hazy motivation also had consequences for generic form, namely 'dass man sich mit den Hauptpersonen im Guten wie im Bösen kaum identifizieren mag.'²⁰ Unlike the clear horizon of political intention and spectator identification that had informed *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*, for many spectators the director's return to terrorism added up to 'ein verfehltes Melodram', as Christina White observes.²¹ But as Lellis and Moeller correctly suggest, *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* is a film 'that examines political ambiguities and contradictions rather than one that has a propagandistic agenda,'²² or as the director himself suggested, 'this [film] is not about political ideas, this is about people who struggle with political ideas.'²³

¹⁷ Moeller and Lellis provide a concise account of Viett's initial involvement in the film. See their *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 311.

¹⁸ Bernd SOBOLLA, 'Es gab einen gemeinsamen Boden', *Freitag*, 15 September 2000.

¹⁹ See Constanze v. BULLION, 'RAF light und die Idylle im Osten', source unknown. Obtained from the Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

²⁰ ZIEGLER, 'Man kann das so oder so erzählen'. Viett expresses an identical opinion: 'Es gibt keine Identifikationsmöglichkeit mit den Figuren, weder positive noch negative.' See SOBOLLA, 'Man kann das so oder so erzählen'.

²¹ Cited in Jennifer Marson WILLIAM, 'When West Meets East and Decides to Stay: Shared Historical Experience in Volker Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss*'. *German Studies Review*, 28:1 (2005), pp. 127-40 (129).

²² MOELLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 311.

²³ MILLER, 'An Interview with German Filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff'.

Despite this critically turbulent reception *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* has attracted more academic interest (although still limited) than the other post-unification terrorism films discussed in this study and beyond. This might in part be attributable to the weight carried by its director's name. More likely, however, is the film's examination of Germany's divided past which emphasizes commonality rather than difference. For Moeller and Lellis, the film is a positive attempt to 'heal the wounds of a Germany divided into East and West after World War II and along generational lines in the 1960s'.²⁴ Similarly, for Jennifer Marston Williams the film 'problematizes the assumption that the West comprised both the victors and the unequivocal good guys of the Cold War', moving beyond binary oppositions to create 'a common German-German story and history out of a 40-year period of political disunity.'²⁵ Such readings are, of course, of value and will be important to our discussion also. However, by privileging the film as text about the upheavals of unification, such readings gloss over the problematic representation of terrorist activity which warrants much closer attention, and to which we now turn.

'Wir sind die Räuber': 'Pop' goes the RAF?

Die Stille nach dem Schuss opens with a bank robbery which, we discover, is being recalled in epistolary form on the eve of German unification. Rita's decision to divulge the true extent of her past life as a West German terrorist to her East German friend Tatjana is prompted by this historical caesura which signals the end of Rita's political hopes, but which for Tatjana marks an optimistic beginning free of dictatorial strictures. But the past life which Tatjana can only read about is recalled for the spectator in a bold visual style which matches the audacity of the robbery itself and

²⁴ MOELLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 311.

²⁵ WILLIAMS, 'When East Meets West and Decides to Stay', p. 137.

which for Rita exemplifies 'die heiteren Jahre', a time when she and her comrades 'dachten, daß wir die Größten sind.'

The cell's hard-core of Rita, Andi and Klatte storms the bank, but their guns remain in the background. Instead, the only thing truly aimed at the bystanders is confectionary: 'Schokoküsse' are distributed as recompense for the inconvenienced bank customers in an episode lifted straight out of Viett's *Bewegung 2. Juni* biography. Adding to Rita's assessment of the 'heiteren Jahre' is the accompanying audio-track – a music-box rendition of what Moeller and Lellis identify as the 'Internationale' workers' anthem.²⁶ This musical motif is the closest we get to background information, deployed as synecdoche for the left-wing politics which informed the period. But re-rendered in the ethereal tones of a child's music box, the anthem is incongruous with the nihilistic absolutism commonly found in hegemonic cultural representations of the RAF. Rather, the distribution of cakes and the fairytale qualities of the music erode the violent threat posed by the guns which never exceed a decorative status during this terrorist action. Less an act of the 'blindwütigen Mörder' of the hegemonic imagination, here terrorism would seem to be depicted 'als schalkhafter Ungehorsam', to quote Thomas Klingensmaier.²⁷ The playful nature of the robbery is neatly exemplified in an exchange between Klatte and an elderly woman who arrives slightly too late to witness the whole of the spectacle. Chomping on a 'Schokokuss' while he guards the entrance to the bank, Klatte invites the woman to participate: 'Komm rein Oma. Hier ist gerade einen Banküberfall!' 'Ach!'. exclaims the woman, feigning expected disdain at these young rabble rousers, before craning her neck to get a better look at the show.

²⁶ See MOELLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 315.

²⁷ Thomas KLINGENMAIER, 'Herbst der Desperados', *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 14 September 2000.

The sourcing of Viett's biography places Schlöndorff's fictional composite of terrorist activity in a recognizable historical past but, owing to the lack of any visible motivating factors, the critics perceived a decontextualisation and depoliticization of terrorism, the result of which was a pastiche of critically unreflective moments and images which favoured aesthetic intensity. *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* was judged to be a film in which 'die gängigen Klichees', to quote Dietrich Kuhlbrodt, are spewed forth in relation to West German terrorist activity so that 'das Zeichen' and 'die Empfindung' prevail.²⁸ Indeed, for Peter Zander the apparent prevalence of symbols and signs over analysis marked out *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* as a terrorist 'Retro-Film'²⁹ in which, as Georg Seesslen adds, 'ihre Welt auf eine Addition von Zeichen reduziert [ist].'³⁰ This is evident in the clichéd abstractions the terrorists spout which, echoing the use of the worker's anthem, similarly stand as semiotic shorthand for implied, but otherwise unexplored, ideological and political values. After storming the bank Rita declares this is 'eine Enteignungs-Aktion' because, as she declares with an expression of smug superiority, 'Eigentum ist Diebstahl!'

The terrorists' bravado extends to their wardrobe. Schlöndorff deploys the visual iconography most commonly associated with the 'terrorist' as an aesthetic phenomenon. Leather jackets and shades are on full display, enveloped by the haze of Andi's cigarette smoke and thus promoting an aura of terrorist-chic. Rita and her comrades are at the height of their game. Revelling in their notoriety, Rita boldly declares to the public and bank clerks alike: 'wir sind die Räuber. Ihr kennt uns aus der Tagesschau, und Bild-Zeitung.' Mention of the *Tagesschau* underlines the problematic nature of Schlöndorff's representational strategy, particularly if we recall

²⁸ Georg SEESLEN. 'Zweierlei Wahn', *Die Zeit*, 14 September 2000.

²⁹ Peter ZANDER, 'Die verlorene Ehre der Inge Viett', source unknown. Obtained from the Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

³⁰ SEESLEN, 'Zweierlei Wahn'.

Veiel's *Black Box BRD*. Indeed, Rita is content to embrace the media patterns of visual indoctrination which the state used to organize and shape meaning surrounding the RAF into a public consensus, but which Veiel's text worked to problematize and innovate. The episode can also be contrasted with Petzold's text which elides any potential for radical glamour through its sober aesthetic depiction of the botched bank job and a dress code which reflects the pressures of survival in the illegality of the terrorist underground rather than the radical excess seized upon by the 'Prada-Meinhof' generation.

In this regard, for Klingensmaier, the director's representation of terrorist activity served a clear and reprehensible aim:

Schlöndorff scheint einfach den Anschluss an die neudeutsche Spaßgesellschaft zu suchen, also seine Hauptfigur Rita einem jüngeren Publikum nahe bringen zu wollen, indem er sie als nur dem Bauch und kaum dem Kopf gehorchende Sucherin nach dem nächsten Kick zeigt – als Poseurin, die mal eben halb ironisch die medial vertrauten Posen des Banküberfalls übt, aber morgen schon was anderes machen möchte.³¹

Schlöndorff's *westalgie* revisitation of the terrorist legacy was thus viewed as crying out for the consumer affection of the 'Prada-Meinhof' generation, sifting the carcass of the radical past for the elements of radical chic which only served the commodification of an old political culture to be indulged by the dominant 89er pop culture of the Berlin Republic.

Their mission successful the group splits up, with Rita and Andi discarding their disguises as they go. Rita and Andi even have time to steal a kiss as part of their cover when a police car speeds by, evoking the excitement associated with such cinematic outlaws as Bonnie and Clyde, immortalized in the 1967 film of the same name by American director Arthur Penn with the sensationalistic tagline 'They're

³¹ KLINGENMAIER, 'Herbst der Desperados'.

young... they're in love... and they kill people.' Another popular outlaw with strong cinematic roots is also clearly evoked when Rita empties hundreds of coins from the robbery into the begging bowl of a nearby tramp, puffing up with pride as she goes and feeling that, like Robin Hood, she is fighting on behalf of the public, redistributing the nation's wealth by literally giving to the poor. Unimpressed by Rita's rose-tinted recollection of her past, Margaret Köhler similarly viewed the film's opening as reductive: 'die RAF und die Bewegung 2. Juni werden auf ein par Ulk-Sätze [...] *reduziert*' so that 'die Sehnsucht nach einer gerechten Welt erscheint nur als Fußnote, der Aufbruch einer Generation als Zug der Lemminge.'³²

Unsurprisingly, for Viett the overall coding of the robbery was reprehensible: 'die rennen da mal eben in die Bank, rufen "Nieder mit dem Kapitalismus!", das ist einfach finster.'³³ Indeed, for the former terrorist the so-called 'heiteren Jahre' are passed off by Schlöndorff as the 'leichten Jahre':

Wir waren euphorisch und glaubten, wirklich etwas bewegen zu können. Aber zu behaupten, es seien unsere leichten Jahre gewesen, und dann einen Anarchismus in bunten Bildern, aber ohne Hintergrund zu zeigen, das ist verantwortungslos [...] Es ist nie leicht, einen Banküberfall zu machen.³⁴

But while the director's aesthetic strategy is not wholly unproblematic, rather than mortgaging his generational legacy to the pop culture of the post-unification German state, there is evidence to suggest that Schlöndorff is in fact expounding his own sense of loss for the political idealism of his generation which he feels is sadly lacking in the socio-cultural reality of the Berlin Republic in the new millennium. Inge Viett's criticism unwittingly touches upon the strategy behind the depiction of Rita's 'heitere Jahre', namely that in transitional stage between student radicalism and

³² Margaret KÖHLER, 'Der Terrorist im Stasi-Mief', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 14 September 2000 (my italics).

³³ BULLION, 'RAF light und die Idylle im Osten'

³⁴ SOBOLLA, 'Es gab einen gemeinsamen Boden'.

terrorism the proponents 'waren euphorisch und glaubten, wirklich etwas bewegen zu können.' Some 20 years on from the events of the 'German Autumn', Schlöndorff is not much interested in further expounding the political motivation behind the terrorists' call to arms but neither is he attempting to render the violence that they advocated inert. Rather he is trying to relocate the politically charged 'Lebensgefühl' which accompanied the period. If the director is guilty of nostalgic wallowing then it is for this aspect of pre-unification Germany which he feels is lacking in the unified German state.

In a short essay on the impact of film on '68, written in 1998, Schlöndorff points to his generation's decision to take to the streets 'als Ausdruck eines neuen Lebensgefühls', adding

ich glaube, daß der Film in den Jahren davor dazu beigetragen hat, dieses Lebensgefühl zu entwickeln. Nicht 1968 hat den deutschen Film verändert, sondern der deutsche Film war schon vor 1968 Ausdruck einer Gesellschaft, die auf Veränderungen drängte.³⁵

Schlöndorff is not alone in such a sentiment. Gerd Koenen also points to the influence of film on the 'generation of 68', noting how 'viele, die später in den Terrorismus abgelitten, haben berichtet, alles sei ihnen *anfangs* "wie ein Film" vorgekommen, ein Kriminalfilm, Politthriller oder Italo-Western, je nach Temperament.'³⁶ Schlöndorff cites a very early example of the *Jungen Deutschen Films* – Ulrich Shamoni's *Es* (1965) – as a paradigm for the catalytic function of film behind this *Lebensgefühl* which was not limited to film, but which 'auch die Zeitschriften *Konkret* oder *Twen*, die Beatles, die Rolling Stones und Bob Dylan ausdrückten.'³⁷ The international dimension of this new outlook in the 1960s also sees Schlöndorff privilege Louis

³⁵ Volker SCHLÖNDORFF, 'Film', in Christiane LANDGREBE and Jörg PLATH (eds.), *'68 und die Folgen. Ein unvollständiges Lexikon* (Berlin: Argon, 1998), pp. 35-37 (35).

³⁶ KOENEN, *Das rote Jahrzehnt*, p. 15 (my italics).

³⁷ SCHLÖNDORFF, 'Film', p. 36.

Malle's *Viva Maria* (1965) – on which Schlöndorff served as assistant director – as a further filmic referent for the nascent '68er movement' in West Germany. In Schlöndorff's words, Malle's cult film in which the two Marias (played by Brigitte Bardot and Jeanne Moreau) lead a socialist revolution in Mexico 'verkörperte die spielerische Anarchie auf attraktive Weise',³⁸ inspiring the 'Viva-Maria-Gruppe' (one of the first attempts at a counter-cultural commune which counted Rudi Dutschke, albeit briefly, among its members),³⁹ and it is this tone which the opening scenes of *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* would seem to want to strike.

Specifically, Schlöndorff's composite of terrorist activity appears to draw a line of qualitative difference between the early days of terrorist activity, which appears to be viewed in terms of optimistic 'Spaßguerilla' activity, and the subsequent hardened, morally dubious and ideologically diffuse activity of the 'Stadtguerilla.' In so doing, the director attempts to relocate this sense of 'playful anarchy', euphoria and so a 'heitere' utopian belief in the possibilities for change which he feels was subsequently eroded and has been lost altogether post-unification. As such, Schlöndorff's nostalgic impulse would seem to be a lament for lost idealism in the face of the very generation of pop culture which would appropriate the terrorist past as a consumer commodity. Indeed, as Schlöndorff himself suggests, 'how can one survive without ideas at all? Is it just consumerism, just go shopping lifelong? Will that fulfil us? I don't think so. I think we will always have to give a meaning to life.'⁴⁰

Although *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* might appear to valorize the director's generation of radical activists, Schlöndorff's sympathy for the rebellious and ideologically charged 'Lebensgefühl' of the 60s and early 70s and its proponents does

³⁸ Ibid, p. 37.

³⁹ The name of the film was taken by the 'Viva Maria group', the first student commune in Germany which preceded the infamous *Kommune 1*, and whose members included Fritz Teufel and, albeit briefly, Rudi Dutschke.

⁴⁰ MILLER, 'An Interview with German Filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff'.

not diminish his opinion that terrorism was an ill-fated socio-political trajectory. Although Schlöndorff does little to explore the motivating factors behind Rita's turn to terror during the opening bank robbery, terrorism is not depicted as being without consequences. The nostalgia which informs the film's opening is counterpoised with an increasingly elegiac tone which is not limited to the loss of a sustainable ideology, utopian or otherwise, but for the way in which 'heitere' idealism was tainted by nihilism and began claiming lives. Far from celebrating terrorism, Schlöndorff in fact rejects it as a viable option.

'Warum habt ihr geschossen?': a lament for lost idealism

Littered with signifiers of the lost *Lebensgefühl* identified by Schlöndorff above, the opening credit sequence of *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* continues to evoke the feeling of a *westalgie* 'retro' film. To the sound of the Rolling Stones' *Street Fighting Man* a tracking shot across the walls of the terrorist safe house documents the iconography of the sixties and seventies. Beginning with the famous photograph of the first student martyr Benno Ohnesorg, the camera passes over images of Che Guevara, Jimi Hendrix, the subversive poems of Brecht and a poster for *Viva Maria*, a mini-bust of Karl Marx, and a *Ton-Steine-Scherben* record,⁴¹ before gliding over a table covered in literature which includes *Die Tote sollen Schweigen* and a copy of *Der Spiegel* which features the latest in a series on 'die Sympathisanten,' before resting on a pair of hands (belonging to Klatte) loading a gun.

For Matteo Galli the parading of decontextualised counter-cultural and terrorist images is similarly indicative of a 'Neukontextualisierung', whereby cultural texts, such as *Die Stille nach dem Schuss*, 'sich mit einer gewissen Freiheit der

⁴¹ Formed in 1970, 'TON-STEINE-SCHERBEN' was the label under which R.P.S. Lanrue, Rio Reiser, Wolf Seidel and Kai Sichtermann released such songs as "MACHT KAPUTT WAS EUCH KAPUTT MACHT" und "WIR STREIKEN", which appealed to the zeitgeist.

historischen Fakten zugunsten einiger simplifizierender Kurzschlüsse bedienen.⁴² Furthermore, he identifies a further strategy behind the opening credits. By beginning the tracking shot with the image of Benno Ohnesorg and ending on a loaded gun, Schlöndorff is read by Galli as belonging to the ranks of cultural commentators such as Koenen who have sought to bind '68 directly to the RAF: 'Dadurch wollte Schlöndorff höchstwahrscheinlich zum Ausdruck bringen, dass die Konter-Kultur von 1968 direkt zum Terrorismus geführt hat.'⁴³ But surely Galli's assumption here is mistaken. As much as the film acknowledges a temporal link, in so far as the terrorists emerged from the same generational backdrop as those who shaped the politics of the counter culture, it does not evoke a causal progression. What is clear as far as Schlöndorff is concerned, however, is that the counter-cultural *Lebensgefühl* was dealt an irrevocable blow by terrorism, the increasingly violent politics of which represented a dead end for the utopianism of the 60s and early 70s. The recent DVD release of *Deutschland im Herbst* features an interview with Schlöndorff which reveals more on this line of thought. Reflecting on the zenith of this increasingly damaging trajectory he recalls the suicides and subsequent burial of Baader, Ensslin and Raspe, and suggests:

Man spürte, so ein Zeitabschnitt ist beendet. Das waren also die 68er und Folgejahre, die 70er Jahre, und irgendwie sind damit alle Hoffnung und Utopien und so weiter beerdigt worden. Es ging also nicht mehr darum hier etwa Terroristen zu beerdigen. Es war wirklich eigentlich das Ende von den Träumen, mit denen man mal aufgebrochen war, und das traurigste an dem Selbstmord, fand ich, war ja gerade, dass es nach meiner Überzeugung ein Selbstmord war. Das heißt, dass die, die mal so aufgebrochen waren, um einen

⁴² Matteo GALLI, "‘Mit dem Einkaufswagen durch den Geschichts-Supermarkt’? Zu einigen Bestandteilen des so genannten Mythos RAF in den Künsten: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Neukontextualisierung", in Matteo GALLI and Heinz-Peter PREUSSER (eds.) *Mythos Terrorismus: Vom Deutschen Herbst zum 11. September*. Jahrbuch Literatur und Politik, Band 1 (Universitätsverlag Winter: Heidelberg, 2006), pp. 101-16 (104).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

verknöcherten Staat zu verändern und eine Gesellschaft neu zu beleben, zum Schluß keinen anderen Ausweg mehr wußten als sich selbst umzubringen. Das ist einfach wieder einmal das traurige Ende einer Revolution in Deutschland.⁴⁴ Although sympathetic toward the terrorists' original aims, the implications of their nihilistic worldview for the *Lebensgefühl* of Schlöndorff's generation are clear to the director: 'their politics were wrong, terrorism didn't lead anywhere. But the basis of the rebellion, and their urge to build a bridge to the third world and bring that struggle to the urban West, well, in the '70s that sounded like a valid idea',⁴⁵ adding elsewhere, 'Tragischer kann Idealismus nicht enden [...] Mit ihnen [den Terroristen] sei der ganze Aufbruch der 68er beendet und gescheitert.'⁴⁶

The end to an innocence of idealism and playful anarchy is symbolized by the gun. As we saw above, guns are present in the earlier pastiche of counter-cultural euphoria, but remain in the background. The final image of the long tracking shot however lingers on the gun being loaded by Klatte, signalling the break with *Westalgie* associated with 'heitere' idealism and so the move from ideals to deadly reality. From here on, Rita and her comrades must reckon with the consequences of their increasing violence for the pursuit of a better world.

Klatte is loading a gun in anticipation of Andi's prison break. Their plan involves Friedericke⁴⁷ gaining access to the prison by posing as a lawyer's assistant, with a gun concealed in her brief case. A 'refugee' from bourgeois excess – claiming that she was sick of eating salmon and playing tennis – she seems the natural choice. The plot hatched by the fictional terrorist cell again points to the composite nature of Schlöndorff's narrative, recalling, in part, the *Bewegung 2. Juni* operation, in which

⁴⁴ See 'Gegenöffentlichkeit herstellen: Interview mit Volker Schlöndorff' on the Art Haus DVD release of *Deutschland im Herbst* (2004).

⁴⁵ MILLER, 'An interview with German filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff'.

⁴⁶ Volker SCHLÖNDORFF, 'Die mörderischen Kinder', *die Zeit*, 4 October 2007.

⁴⁷ Friedericke is played by Jenny Schily, the daughter of Otto Schily, former student activist and later minister in Schroeder's Red-Green Coalition.

Viett was involved, to free Till Meyer from Berlin's Moabit prison in 1978,⁴⁸ but also the jail break of Andreas Baader in 1971 by the nascent RAF.⁴⁹ The aesthetic strategy used by the director to depict the liberation of Andi does, however, differ to the earlier portrayal of the bank robbery. Gone is the self-aggrandizing attitude of the earlier scenes. Friedericke is ill at ease during the whole operation and her desire to do something meaningful with her life sees her become embroiled in a man's death. Certainly, the figure of Friedericke frustrates Viett's contention voiced above that the terrorist legacy is passed off by the director as 'die leichten Jahre.' From her involvement in West Germany to the consequences of her East German exile, there is nothing 'heiter' or 'leicht' about Friedericke's turn to terror, even if her own motivation is, at best, sketchy.

Shots are fired by both Andi and Klatte. Innocence is lost when Andi pulls the trigger, fatally wounding the lawyer who had mistakenly taken on Friedericke as his assistant. What the critics failed to note is that we are not invited a voyeuristic gaze into terrorist activity on this occasion. The brief, chaotic shoot-out between Andi, Klatte and the prison wardens is played out off screen, the camera choosing instead to linger on the uncomfortable sight of Friedericke who visibly winces with the sound of every shot fired. Stunned, and so a moment behind Andi and Klatte, Friedericke passes the lawyer she betrayed who is slumped on the floor with a bloody chest wound and another warden, sprawled motionless across a row of chairs.

Rita's joy at seeing Andi is short lived. They kiss, but this time the sense of playful anarchy that had accompanied their stolen kiss following the bank robbery is frustrated. As Friedericke reveals what occurred, both she and Rita join in a chorus of

⁴⁸ For a detailed account of the operation see Michael MÜLLER and Andreas KANONENBERG, *Die RAF-Stasi-Connection* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1992), pp. 78-80.

⁴⁹ Wanted by the authorities, Ensslin similarly assumed a false identity – posing as Dr Gretel Weitemeier – so that she could gain access to Baader in prison ahead of his 'liberation' in 1970.

condemnation, repeatedly asking 'warum habt ihr geschossen?' as euphoria gives way to anguish and shouting. In the final shot Friedericke drops to the floor of the getaway vehicle, clasping her head in her hands. The cell's idealism has been compromised, rendered morally bankrupt by indiscriminate killing which was motivated not by the group's idealism but by the pressures of illegality; the desire to free their leader. The group now has no choice but to go underground.

With the aid of the Stasi, Rita and comrades travel to the Middle East before entering the French militant underground, now ready to implode under the pressures of illegality and in-fighting. The decontextualised, superficial sounding jargon spouted during the bank robbery has been replaced with impenetrable dogma as the 'comrades' increasingly retreat into themselves. Viewing themselves as occupying the avant-garde of terror, they even film their own squabbles and seem far more concerned with their image than a desire to change the world. In a heated argument Friedericke reproaches Andi for his increasing slide into self-aggrandizing narcissism: 'du fickst rum und trägst Designer-Anzug.' Although Schlöndorff retains sympathy for characters such as Rita and Friedericke who retain an element of utopian belief, he attacks the slide from ideals and reality in Andi and his new hardcore of hangers-on. In many ways Friedericke's acerbic retort also attacks the terrorist posturing that the critics had in fact levelled at the feet of the director. Rita and Andi begin to drift apart precisely because Rita is still more interested in a desire to change the world for the better than to start a fashion revolution.⁵⁰

But Rita's ideals are soon put to the test, and with a fatal outcome. Riding her motorbike around Paris with her wig for a disguise, but without a helmet. Rita is

⁵⁰ Rita suggests that she became involved in terrorism because she was 'in Andi verknallt', but in the director's commentary track Schlöndorff avers that this was a flippant remark intended to rile the upper middle class Friedericke who found her own way in to the terrorist underground because she was tired of eating salmon and playing tennis.

stopped by a policeman. The motorbike itself has interesting implications. Less a symbol of terrorist excess (Rita is chided by her comrades for this luxury indulgence) the motorcycle might be considered as a further expression of the *Lebensgefühl* identified by the director above; as Moeller and Lellis aver, 'motorcycles have long carried connotations of personal freedom, individualism, and antiauthoritarian defiance.'⁵¹ But Rita is now a wanted criminal. Due to her traffic law mistake she fears that she will be recognized as a wanted fugitive and speeds off. She takes refuge in an underground car park, but as she attempts to leave the policeman appears blocking the only way out. Her terrorism compromises her idealism and like a panicked, cornered animal, Rita reacts instinctively, pulling out her gun and shooting. Again, Schlöndorff refuses to show the gun shot hitting its target, focusing instead on Rita stunned reaction to her own violent capability. The playful depiction associated with the bank robbery is undermined by the altogether more sober depiction of the policeman's death. The dimly lit car park is devoid of colour, as is Rita who wears a dark wig and leather jacket. Neither is there any music to accompany the fatal episode.

With this act Rita crosses a metaphorical border that cannot be withdrawn; her previously innocent revolutionary zeal becomes tainted with blood. Clearly, for the director there is nothing to be celebrated in relation to the terrorism of his generation. The shooting of the Parisian policeman is again based on the biography of Viêt. Although Viêt's target was not killed, he was handicapped as a result of his injuries. Viêt has never shown remorse for her actions, but her filmic counterpart is seemingly driven to atone for her crimes and her blood-stained idealism. She again retreats to the GDR but this time she decides to remain, attempting to rediscover her idealism by

⁵¹ MOELLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 316.

working to aid the German state which she takes to be a working articulation of the vision she had shared for West Germany. As Andreas Kilb eloquently puts it, 'als sie feuert, schließt sie die Augen. Als sie sie wieder öffnet, ist sie in der DDR'. and the film's second act begins.⁵² The second part of this chapter moves on to consider Schlöndorff's deployment of the former East German state, which continues the elegiac tone, lamenting the loss of ideology post-unification.

'Komisch. Du kommst her und ich will weg': ideological recuperation in the East

For Silvia Hallensleben the shift from West to East was too abrupt and left Schlöndorff's text with an identity crisis of its own: 'Ein bisschen DEFA-Komödie, ein bisschen *Katharina Blum*', for Hallensleben the sum parts of *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* did not form a satisfactory whole.⁵³ As we move into a discussion of Schlöndorff and Kohlhaase's depiction of the former east we will see how, in fact, the fusion of East and West German cinematic and ideological experience points to a sense of sameness in difference, continuing Schlöndorff's lament for a lost sense of political idealism post-unification.

In his study of East Germany since unification Paul Cooke points to the way in which *Westalgie* has recently found expression in an east German setting in a number of cultural texts, so that the GDR becomes a place where 'artists can nostalgically rediscover what is for them a more ethical value system, which they feel was part of west German culture before 1989, and which they use to critique the late-capitalist, consumer-driven post-unification state.' As such, the differentiation between 'East' and 'West' comes less to represent geographical borders than 'a socio-political value

⁵² Andreas KILB, 'Die Verwirrung des Zöglings Rita', *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 14 September 2000.

⁵³ Silvia HALLENSLEBEN, 'Eine deutsche Rita', *Tagesspiegel*, 14 September 2000.

system.’⁵⁴ Rita begins ‘das Leben der Arbeiterklasse’ in an attempt to redeploy her utopian ideals in the GDR, the home of, what she at least perceives to be, socialism in action. The East becomes a place where Rita can, as Schlöndorff suggests, ‘put her utopian ideas to the test with reality.’⁵⁵

Schlöndorff suggests that Rita’s relocation to the east embodies an attempt to explain a country, to present a more balanced perspective of life in the east which does away with the dominant GDR clichés of a wholly corrupt ‘Unrechtsstaat.’⁵⁶ As such, *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* can certainly be aligned with a shift in cultural representations of the East German state away from a totalitarian paradigm whereby, as Cooke suggests, ‘we begin to see the authors of a range of cultural texts focus instead on what they view as the ‘normal’, everyday aspects of life in the East, aspects that are not reflected in the view of the GDR as a totalitarian “Stasi State.”’⁵⁷ Indeed, from a set visit during the film’s production, Frank Junghänel recalls Schlöndorff’s direction to his cast of East German extras during the filming of the textile factory staff party:

Mein Name ist Volker Schlöndorff. Wir versuchen heute ein Szene nachzustellen, die zu Ihrem eigenen gehört. Bitte machen Sie alles so, wie Sie es bei Ihren Betriebsfeiern erlebt haben, *nicht komischer, aber auch nicht langweiliger.*⁵⁸

Although such direction may seem a little vague, it nonetheless demonstrates a desire to avoid an extremist representation of the GDR at either end of the political spectrum, instead favouring a more balanced approach towards the East German *Alltag*: when asked by the lighting director how the east should be lit, Schlöndorff

⁵⁴ COOKE, *Representing East Germany since Unification*, p. 14.

⁵⁵ MILLER, ‘An interview with German filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff’.

⁵⁶ Director’s commentary to Kinowelt Home Entertainment DVD release of *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* (2003).

⁵⁷ COOKE, *Representing East Germany since Unification*, p. 103.

⁵⁸ Frank JUNGHÄNEL, ‘Zurück im Alltag’, source unknown(my emphasis). Obtained from the Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

claims to have suggested that the same sun shone on the GDR as the rest of the world.⁵⁹ For the critics, however, this led to further complaints: with Rita's move to the GDR the film 'wird zum warmherzigen Defa-Heimatfilm' for Helmut Ziegler to name but one.⁶⁰

Within the private sphere of the GDR's 'Nischengesellschaft' there is certainly a plenty of colour. The suburban GDR evokes the sense of a rural idyll. The regional train rattles past houses surrounded by greenery and an old lady surveys the scene from her apartment window. Below we find a birthday party for Tatjana's father. Numerous guests dance and chat and the father toasts his guests, celebrating the sense of community that has coalesced in his back garden. In a country where it was legal to shoot anyone who tried to leave Tatjana's father regales his guests with stories about his time in China. Although an ideological partner to the Soviets' German satellite state, and so a sanctioned travel destination, his time abroad counters the dominant perception of a population that never glimpsed life beyond the concrete of the Berlin Wall. Towards the film's conclusion, the summer resort on the Baltic coast serves to further 'normalize' East German experience. The temporary summer cinema theatre, sand and sea are the setting for young love and happy, normal childhood experience.

This is Rita's new home, and she throws herself into 'das Leben der Arbeiterklasse' with gusto. With the help of Erwin Hull of the Stasi, a completely new identity is created for Rita. She enters a VEB textile factory as Susanne Schmidt, who has apparently decided to leave the west due to her leftist political outlook. The new legend that the Stasis create for her is not far removed from the truth because, as Erwin suggests, 'am besten lügt man mit der Wahrheit'. The sense of community that

⁵⁹ Director's commentary.

⁶⁰ Helmut ZIEGLER, 'Man kann das so oder so erzählen'.

Rita encounters in the private sphere is, however, not as apparent in the public sphere with the sense of solidarity expounded in the GDR's state rhetoric is lacking in the textile factory. Rita is initially drawn to befriending Tatjana because she is mercilessly picked on by her co-workers. 'Die Zicke ist sie', is the best they have to say about her. For Tatjana life in the GDR is a drab and oppressive existence. Her co-workers appear equally as disillusioned with the state but the difference is in the way they deal with their discontentment. As Rita discovers, the average GDR citizen is as apolitical as the western masses, but whereas the other women in the textile factory deal with the socio-political realities of life in the GDR with stubborn indifference, Tatjana resorts to alcoholism. Often missing from work due to her drinking, as well as sporting what resembles a gothic, and so western, dress sense replete with dyed hair, Tatjana is singled out for special treatment, defined in the GDR as an unredeemable 'Asoziale.' For Moeller and Lellis, Rita's burgeoning 'lesbian attachment to Tatjana is to a woman who still embodies a spunky anti-authoritarian attitude' in a land of conformity, but she is also a vessel for Rita's desire to help.⁶¹

Tatjana is perplexed by Rita's decision to relocate to what she views as a state prison: 'Komisch', she says to Rita, 'du kommst her and ich will weg.' Rita's reply, that 'es ist wie es ist. Hier wie da', does little to assuage Tatjana's sense of isolation, and her reply exemplifies the petrified social conditions of life under the regime: 'das würde ich gern selbst herausfinden. Vielleicht würde ich zurückkommen. Dann würde ich freiwillig hier.' This early suggestion to Rita that life in the GDR is not what she imagines is indicative of the critical capacity of the film in which although East Germany is not presented as merely a 'Stasi state', neither is it a completely 'warmherziges Heimat'. Rita also encounters the snarling gaze of her co-workers as

⁶¹ MOELLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 313.

her perception of the GDR fails to live up to expectations. A money box is passed around in the staff canteen for donations to Nicaragua to which Rita contributes a considerable amount. This does little to impress her co-workers who find her gesture naïve and annoying. Tatjana later asks Rita if she really expects the money to reach its intended destination but Rita can only look puzzled and ask why it should not. While we are sympathetic towards her idealism, we are similarly struck by her naivety towards the reality of corruption inherent to the regime, a banal reality for her co-workers.

But Rita finds herself among a younger generation of East German citizens for whom ‘real life cannot be adjusted to be in tune with the demands of ideology,’ to evoke the film’s co-writer Wolfgang Kohlhaase.⁶² Speaking of his own experience as an East German citizen, Kohlhaase’s insight into the GDR is revealing of Rita’s apparently politically determined blind spots. A member of the GDR’s founding generation, Kohlhaase distinguishes his own cohort from that of Tatjana and Rita, suggesting that:

there was a new generation of people who experienced the country in a different way from us. This also tells us something about the demise of the GDR. It did not satisfy their needs in the way it had satisfied ours. These young people had grown up in a state which already existed, whereas we had the feeling that we had invented it and were making something of it. With hindsight everything looks inevitable. At the beginning it looked like, and was, a great adventure.⁶³

The GDR can be read as having shared a similar fate to that of Rita’s terrorist organization, both of which began to lose touch with reality as their ideals became distorted. Rita, however, has more in common with Kohlhaase’s generation of state founders than with the disillusioned masses who experienced a socio-political reality

⁶² Wolfgang KOHLHAASE, ‘DEFA: A Personal View’, in ALLAN & SANDFORD (eds.), *DEFA: East German Cinema*, pp. 117-130 (124).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

neither of their making, nor to their liking. The idea behind the socialist project in the East, if not its execution, is that which Rita has been fighting for in the West, which she and her comrades would have moved for the formation of had their campaign not sabotaged itself through violent excess. As such, Rita represents a de-facto first generation East German in the wrong time. She enters the system and experiences it in much the same way as its founders for whom it was ‘a great adventure’.

As she explains to the people at the birthday party for Tatjana’s father, ‘ich fand *die Idee* besser: weniger Armut, weniger Reichtum’ (my emphasis). Clearly the ‘idea’ upon which the GDR was founded fails to correspond to its execution in a regime that has lost touch with reality, but nonetheless the idea itself is enough to sustain Rita’s devotion to a system which stands as the desired other to the socio-political realities of West Germany. A committed socialist, Rita still believes in the ideals even if the reality has become distorted. This aligns Rita with critical intellectuals such as Christa Wolf, who famously declared in her 4 November 1989 speech: ‘Stell dir vor, es ist Sozialismus, und keiner geht weg!’, never having lost faith in the ideals of the original project even in light of its distorted realization. Furthermore, for Rita the GDR is her salvation. Echoing Kohlhaase’s generation, which had experienced the Third Reich and embraced the GDR as their salvation from National Socialism, a similar dynamic is at work in the example of Rita, for whom the GDR stands as the potential salvation from her past (crimes). As Palfreyman suggests, Rita’s flight to the GDR becomes a quest for identity: ‘Rita Vogt, now disillusioned with terrorism and killing, needs to erase her past self completely and seizes the opportunity to do this with gusto.’⁶⁴ Indeed, for Susanne Schmidt, as Rita is now known, the GDR represents a space in which she can

⁶⁴ PALFREYMAN, ‘The Fourth Generation’, p. 23.

construct an alternative and, she assumes, sustainable identity. For Rita the GDR becomes a repository for a critical left-wing value system where she might recapture the lost innocence of the ideal by throwing herself into socialism in action, and a new persona. Despite the blood on her hands Rita continues to struggle with her ideals. At the birthday party she tells the assembled guests the cost of the socialism they 'enjoy': 'Dafür sind viele Leute gestorben, hier wie überall auf der Welt.'

Despite not being critical of the regime herself, Rita becomes the optic through which Kohlhaase and Schlöndorff reassess the East. Rita is gifted a Trabant by the Stasi. She takes Tatjana out for a driving lesson who proceeds to reverse with too much enthusiasm and crash the car into a tree. A 'Volkspolizist' happens to be passing by and asks them, 'was haben wir falsch gemacht?' Neither Rita nor Tatjana seem sure of how to answer, but after a short pause Rita suggests 'wir sind gegen einen Baum gefahren(?)' to which the policeman replies 'richtig – das war falsch'. For Stefan Steinberg such a scene falls into the clichéd realm of 'Ossi Jokes', with the pompous and laughable 'Volkspolizist' apparently lecturing the two women.⁶⁵ However, the question posed by the policeman seems to invite a second metaphorical reading. 'Was haben wir falsch gemacht' can be read as asking have we done wrong with our socialist project. In the same way that Rita and Tatjana have crashed against a barrier, the socialist project has hit a dead end. Like the impromptu driving lesson it was a good idea badly executed. The criticism of the GDR creates continuity with Rita's terrorist cell in the west, pointing to a point of commonality. In both cases the ideal which informed the socialist revolution hit a dead end and the great adventure lost touch with reality.

⁶⁵ Stefan STEINBERG. 'Putting his Finger on a Wound: *Rita's Legends (Die Stille nach dem Schuss)*', *World Socialist Web Site*, 3 March 2000 <http://wsws.org/articles/2000/mar2000/bff4-m03_prn.shtml> [accessed on 13 July 2005].

The Stasi is viewed in much the same way. The GDR leadership and its Stasi enforcers recognize that both they and the terrorists were engaged in the same fight against the capitalist system of the West. The so-called 'Gedankenaustausch' between Erwin and Rita's cell clearly serves the GDR's intelligence operations but as Erwin's general suggests, although he does not see the terrorism of the left leading anywhere, 'ich habe natürlich Sympathie für romantisch junge Leute. [...] Wir sind doch auch Romantiker.' But the Stasi is viewed through the same ambivalent lens as the terrorists, a lens which similarly points to a perversion of utopian beginnings. For Schlöndorff:

The behaviour of the old Stasi was surprising – they came out of the Spanish Civil War, out of the old resistance against Hitler, out of the partisan fighters... Weren't they romantics themselves – idealists, who still believed that through certain means a better world could be fashioned?⁶⁶

Much in the same way that Schlöndorff privileges the romantic idealism that informed the terrorism of the RAF but which was destroyed by its violent excess, he laments the loss of the utopian ideal to the flawed socialist dictatorship in the GDR which is summed up in Erwin's invocation of Lenin: 'du wirst sehen, daß wir die Leute manchmal zu ihrem Glück zwingen [...]. Wir sind für die Leute, und deshalb sind wir gegen sie.' Although there is inherent criticism of the trajectories of both the West German terrorists and the GDR, the spectator's sympathies are drawn in a number of directions. Rita is neither a monster nor a saint and, likewise, Erwin and the rest of the Stasi are depicted as neither committed socialists nor the Gestapo in different uniforms. Despite its flaws, the GDR represents a second chance for Rita who attempts to recuperate her bloodied world-view, but as the spectator is keenly aware, by the time Rita escapes to the GDR the country only has a limited future.

⁶⁶ Cited in MOELLER and LELLIS, *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema*, p. 312.

‘Die Geschichte braucht einen Schlusspunkt’

Although Rita is on the run from her past crimes she is accompanied by one aspect of her ‘past self’ that she does not lose sight of – her unwavering belief in a better world beyond the dominant political ideologies of the West. Rita’s new identity, or legend, is as Erwin suggests, ‘dein falsches Leben, das jetzt dein richtiges wird.’ Perhaps for Rita it would be better explained as ‘dein richtiges Leben in dem richtigen Land.’ However, unbeknownst to Rita, the GDR is about to implode due to its status as a ‘falsches Land’, thus taking Rita’s ‘falsches Leben’ and any hope of a future with it.

The process of fleeing the West has fractured Rita’s identity to such an extent that, as Palfreyman suggests, ‘one might argue that her identity began to unravel the moment she effectively abandoned her citizenship of the Federal Republic.’⁶⁷ This is compounded by the fact that, although abandoned, her former life in the Federal Republic keeps catching up with her. During the birthday party for Tatjana’s father, Rita is confronted with a news report on West German television detailing the demise of her former lover Andi at the French border. She is also confronted with her old self featured in a list of terrorists still at large. This time, however, she is not so keen to embrace her infamous medial representation which she had previously played on during the bank robbery which opens the film. This version of herself no longer serves to affirm, but rather to threaten her present identity. Shocked by the report she flees her media reflection, sprinting into the garden with Tatjana and throwing herself into a wild dance with the other revellers.

But Rita’s behaviour at the birthday party is tempered by the euphoria of a nation when the Berlin Wall falls, signalling freedom for the majority, but the end of the road for the former terrorist. Rita is met by colleagues who extol what they believe to be the virtues of the capitalist system in their eager preparation for entry into the

⁶⁷ PALFREYMAN, ‘The Fourth Generation’, p. 23.

West. Shocked by their apparent apathy at the demise of their country Rita complains that: 'ihr habt keine Ahnung was kommen wird. Ihr wißt nicht, was ihr verliert [...]. Es sollte doch eine Welt werden, in der nicht das Geld regiert', only to be met with a sea of angry faces. Given the benefit of hindsight, Rita's words are valid, but her co-workers are not yet ready to hear them. They are more interested in devouring western newspapers which have now become available. The example on display is a copy of *Bild*, which has a detailed report on the capture of Friedericke who had also been hiding out in the East.

Rita is left with nowhere to run. Erwin drives her as far out as he can, to an overpass between east and west on the motorway. 'Da geht es nach Osten, da geht es nach Westen. Gesucht wirst du überall', is all that he can say. The only place in which Rita can now exist is rapidly eroding junction between the two countries. As Rita explains to Tatjana in her letter, 'ich suchte eine andere Welt. Ich wollte vorwärts und nicht zurück,' but now that is the only direction in which she can go. Rita hitches a ride on a motorbike with a 'Wessi' who takes her for an 'Ossi'. In a painful echo of the events in Paris he tells Rita that he cannot take her any further with him because it is illegal for her to ride without a helmet. He adds, 'das weißt du nicht als Ost-Braut. Ihr wart ja ziemlich abgeschnitten bisher. Aber, ich habe keine Vorurteile.' The man's words foreground the 'Mauer im Kopf' mentality that is to come, compounding Schlöndorff's sense of loss for the collapse of socialism and exposing western ignorance of the realities of life in the east. The man gets his comeuppance in so far as Rita then proceeds to steal his bike, to which he remarks 'das ist der Osten', unaware of Rita's true identity. As Rita storms a border checkpoint she is gunned down by a patrol now made up of officers from both sides of the wall, symbolic of the unity between east and west in turning their back on socialism, whether the utopian

idealism of the West German left or the flawed socialist project in the east. Rita stands as the first casualty of the new union and, as such, she becomes indicative of the mood of a nation, symbolic of the wider crisis which Schlöndorff feels is set to befall the newly unified Germany in which ideology will give way to lifelong shopping.

Die Stille nach dem Schuss is not a celebratory film; both the terrorist aberration in the West and the regime in the East are exposed in terms of their shortcomings. Rather, Schlöndorff is lamenting the loss of a utopian ideal which informed the socialist revolution: 'we had the end of socialism in Europe, and we had the winner. The winner, that was the market. And you had the loser, that was all these ideals of the left for which so many people had sacrificed for 150 years.'⁶⁸ Schlöndorff seems to suggest that unification was a missed opportunity for a potential ideological synthesis that could have occurred after the fall of the wall which might have run counter to the global culture of consumerism. With Rita's demise East and West come together to crush the ideals of socialism in favour of the banal shopping directives of global capitalist consumer culture.

⁶⁸ MILLER, 'An Interview with German Filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff'.

Chapter 8

‘Welche Ideen, Ideale haben ihren Wert durch die Zeit behalten?’: Ideological Recuperation and Generational Reconciliation in *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (2004)?

In the previous chapter, I examined the returning 68er Volker Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss*, a filmic response to changing generational attitudes on the issue of '68 and its legacy following unification. The text was misconstrued in the columns of the German print media as a *westalgie* revision of the 68er past which, rather than calling for critical engagement, was a depthless mitigation of terrorism which shamelessly indulged the consumer fascination, or even commodity fetishism held by the 89ers for this once highly controversial, if not taboo, subject. Furthermore, in the view of scholars such as Galli, Schlöndorff's film was attuned to the recent paradigm shift that has seen the already uneasy consensual view of '68 as a political and cultural watershed and its legacy of an *Erfolgsgeschichte* increasingly challenged in favour of a more sceptical view whereby terrorism is located as the direct result of the experimental counterculture of the director's generation.¹ But as I suggest, rather than contesting the meaning of '1968' in light of generational shifts, the returning 68er preserves the socio-ideological critical perspectives of that past as something apart from the urban terrorism that followed in its wake. Moreover, his narrative is by no means cleansed of the consequences of terrorist activity: while the director might be sympathetic towards the militants' aims, he clearly rejects their very violent means, thus contradicting the aforementioned complaint that *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* exonerates the terrorism of the Berlin Republic's pre-history for consumption by its pop-driven youth cohort. Schlöndorff cherry picks his past, relocating and so holding

¹ See GALLI, "Mit dem Einkaufswagen durch den Geschichts-Supermarkt"?, pp. 106-7.

open its political idealism for the so-called 'generation of '89', often viewed as a lost 'Generation X' for which political idealism would appear to have been completely replaced by pop culture.

Given this generation's intense, even when consumerist and ostensibly apolitical, engagement with West Germany's radical past, it should come as no surprise that the final film to be examined in this study is the product of an 89er-director, Hans Weingartner (b. 1970). What is perhaps surprising, however, is the dialogue his film, *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (*The Edukators*), strikes up with the increasingly beleaguered West German past, given that the majority of his peers have chosen to fling the critical perspectives offered by the 68er legacy back in its face. If Schlöndorff laments the loss of the protest generation, then I would contend that Weingartner's text seeks not just to relocate it, but even recuperate it for his own generation which, in his view, 'sei von Orientierungslosigkeit geprägt', whether political or otherwise.² However, *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* follows the lives of an exemplary minority that is politically motivated and wishes to protest against the perceived iniquities of global capitalism. In the case of Weingartner's protagonists, Jan (Daniel Brühl), Jule (Julia Jentsch) and Peter (Stipe Erceg), the sense of 'Orientierungslosigkeit' stems from the question of how one can make a difference when all avenues of resistance appear to have been blocked or co-opted by the transnational flow of capital and commodities of 'the system'. The answer would seem to be the example set by '68. This chapter will consider the 89er director's engagement with '68 and its legacy in the film. As Jan, Jule and Peter search for 'new' ways to take an oppositional stance to the anomic socio-economic structures, they somewhat paradoxically look to the past and the recuperation, if hybridized, of

² See Katja NICODEMUS, 'Denn sie wissen, was sie tun', *Die Zeit*, 25 November 2004, <http://zeus.zeit.de/text/2004/49/Fette_Jahre> [accessed on 17 June 2006]

the 68er past. As such, the abbreviated form of the controversial *NRW-Forum* statement discussed in Chapter 4 – ‘Welche Ideen, Ideale haben ihren Wert durch die Zeit behalten und können nicht als naiv abgetan werden, [...]?’ – might easily have provided the posters for *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* with an apt tagline. As Jan and his friends work through the example left to them by the protest generation, they also encounter and must contend with the spectre of urban terrorism. However, before I move to an analysis of the text, it will first be useful to consider the biography of director Hans Weingartner in closer detail, and to which we now turn.

Hans Weingartner and 89er youth culture

Born in 1970, Hans Weingartner hails from the village of Feldkirch in Vorarlberg, Austria. Between 1990 and 1997, Weingartner studied physics and neuroscience in Vienna before taking up a postgraduate degree in film and television at the *Kunsthochschule für Medien* in Cologne where his graduate film was quickly followed by his first major feature: *Der weiße Rauschen* (2001) gestures to Weingartner’s earlier university training through its story of Lukas (also played by Daniel Brühl in a break-out role), a high-school graduate whose life begins to unravel after he is diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Filmed in and around Weingartner’s *Wohngemeinschaft* (WG) in Cologne, the film garnered considerable critical acclaim, thus paving the way for his second film, *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*. Although the countercultural connotations associated with communal living have long since faded, this choice of setting, which links both films, is more than mere coincidence, gesturing to a further strand of the director’s biography which will be relevant to our subsequent discussion of the latter film.

The revolutionary agenda of *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* is, in part, symptomatic of the director’s own experiences of rebellion. As we have seen, the art

of dissent would appear to have been lost in the pop culture of the '89er' 'Generation X', to which Weingartner belongs. However, it is not that this youth cohort is incapable of social disenchantment and is in fact happy with things the way they are. On the contrary, as Rupa Huq maintains, the members of this generation are 'disenchanted and disenfranchised' and see 'themselves as facing a world of diminished possibilities', but ultimately they are nonetheless 'ostensibly satiated' by the consumer distractions that this world offers them.³ As such, it is not surprising that by the 1990s commentators such as Paul Willis were declaring that 'the moment of the subculture', let alone 68er counterculture, 'is now over', with any political dimension giving way to private absorption, consumption and issues of lifestyle. As a youth survey of Germany's home-grown '89er' 'Xers' conducted by *Der Spiegel* in 1994 concluded:

Sie durchschauen alles, aber sie tun nichts; wenn sie was tun, tun sie nur für sich; sie wollen nichts verändern – außer sich selbst; sie glauben an nichts mehr – außer an sich selbst; sie möchten nicht rebellisch sein, weil sie es rebellischer finden, nicht rebellisch zu sein; denn sie möchten diese alberne, anstrengende Rolle loswerden, die Jugendliche seit den Fünfzigern zu spielen haben.⁴

Echoing the 'Slacker' ethos – a term made popular by American director Richard Linklater's 1991 film of the same name which has become synonymous with the 'Generation X' 'stereotype of the post-beatnik idler who spurned career, ambition and political activism in favour of just hanging out'⁵ – the typical 89er, so it seems, would

³ See HUQ, *Beyond Subculture*, p. 21.

⁴ Taken from *Spiegel* 38, 1994 (p. 58) and cited in Claus LEGGEWIE, *die 89er: Portrait einer Generation* (Hoffman und Campe: Hamburg, 1995), p.25

⁵ Rob STONE. 'Between Sunrise and Sunset: An Elliptical Dialogue between American and European Cinema', in Paul COOKE (ed.) *World Cinema's 'Dialogues' with Hollywood* (Palgrave: Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 218-237 (219).

rather digest the latest pop videos on MTV than any radical agenda. Surveys do however tend to paint pictures with a very broad brush and there are, of course, exceptions.

Bucking the generational trend, Weingartner was one of the a minority whose profound sense of dissatisfaction with administered society compelled him to search for alternatives; speaking in interview the director noted how 'Ich hatte auch in meiner eigenen Geschichte immer wieder dieses Gefühl gehabt, ich müsste rebellieren, es müsste sich alles ändern, und ich wusste nicht wie.'⁶ This unfocused compulsion to rebel and seek out alternatives eventually saw the then twenty-something Weingartner move from Vienna to Berlin to live 'off the grid' with friends in one of the few remaining communal squats left in the 1990s. But as Weingartner points out, during this period 'wir waren nicht mal politisch, es gab keinen Überbau bei uns.'⁷ Far from a countercultural, radical challenge to the hegemony of mainstream society, as communal living had been for the 68ers, this attempt to form a subculture 'außerhalb der Gesellschaft', that is to temporarily 'drop out of circulation' without demanding a political mandate or change was exactly that which, as Sabine von Dirke notes, the 68ers had refuted.⁸ The difficulty for those who want to rebel, it would seem, is how to do so when it all appears to have been said and done, and failed.

Specifically, with *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* Weingartner interrogates the current state of political idealism among the 'Generation Berlin',⁹ posing the question of 'wie man als junger Mensch noch politisch aktiv sein kann' in a cultural climate

⁶ R. GANSERA and F. GÖTTLER, 'Die Liebe in Zeiten der Matrix', *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 23 November 2004, <<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/artikel/462/43419/print.html>> [accessed on 17 July 2006]

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See VON DIRKE, *All Power to the Imagination!*, p. 29.

⁹ See Heinz BUDE, *Generation Berlin* (Berlin: Merve, 2001).

which has revised or remodeled once politically charged subject matter for superficial, fad-driven consumption.¹⁰ This question has a dual concern, and is aimed at two strata in youth society. On the one hand Weingartner points to a lack in his own culture, asking how one can reinvigorate and remobilize a political engagement that is simply lacking among the majority of his generation which has been interpolated by ‘the system’, and, on the other hand, how a resistive minority which is at least attempting to be politically engaged can focus and sustain its nascent activism. As we shall see, in both cases the answer, for Weingartner, rests with an ambivalent relationship to the legacy of the ‘generation of 68’.

In order to clarify Weingartner’s position further, it would be advantageous to consider the generational status of his protagonists briefly. Since the turn of the millennium we have in fact witnessed a rise in the political imagination among the youth which is to be found in the ‘no-logoism’ of the anti-globalisation protest movement (spurred on in no small part by Naomi Klein’s influential 2000 monograph, *No Logo*). It could be argued that this new spate of political activism is in fact championed by a new generation, termed ‘Generation Y’ or the ‘Millennials’, referring to those who came of age at the turn of the new millennium. Arguably, Weingartner’s would-be revolutionaries belong to this latest generational grouping. However, for Weingartner, in terms of political engagement, “‘Jung sein’ hat hier überhaupt nichts mit dem Alter zu sein’.¹¹ The director applies the temporal reach of ‘his’ generation (which came of age in the immediate post-wall years) in broad strokes and, although this points to the problematic nature of generational demarcation, for the sake of clarity of I will refer to 89ers throughout.

¹⁰ See Dietmar KAMMERER, ‘Die private Revolte ist nie privat (Gespräch mit Hans Weingartner)’, *tageszeitung*, 25 November 2004 <<http://www.taz.de/pt/2004/11/25/a0120.1/textdruck>> [accessed on 17 July 2006]

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Where has the revolutionary energy of the youth gone?

After she is fired from her job as a waitress at an exclusive restaurant for smoking in the kitchen, a despondent Jule surveys the Berlin cityscape from the rooftop of a high-rise building with Jan, her partner Peter's best friend whom she had previously avoided due to his eccentric character. Divorced from the frenetic bustle of administered life down below, and aided by a rapidly diminishing bottle of wine, the recently befriended duo waxes lyrical about patterns of thought and behaviour in established society. Jan, posited by the narrative as the leading ideologue of the three friends, comes to the pessimistic conclusion that neo-liberal capitalist economics have penetrated all areas of public life, thus negating the possibility of true individual freedom and so the ability to dissent. In many ways, Jan's unmistakably Marcusean portrait of modern life should come as no surprise. As Douglas Kellner remarks in his introduction to the 2007 reprint of the second edition of *One-Dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse's 'important work of critical social theory [...] continues to be relevant today as the forces of social domination that Marcuse dissected have become even stronger and more prevalent in the years since he wrote the book.'¹² Certainly, the advent of the digital era has seen an explosion in the very means of mass-communication which Marcuse claimed had absorbed individual thought. Further adopting Marcuse's critique of late capitalist societies Jan singles out television, which he aptly refers to by the vernacular 'Glötze', or idiot box, as a mechanism deployed by consumer capitalism to integrate the individual into its world of thoughts and behaviour. For Jan television is a drug which indoctrinates the populace intravenously for 'an average of 4 hours a day' with the opinions of its makers in order to assure a numbing state of conformity. As Jan puts it, what hope is there for

¹² Douglas KELLNER, 'Introduction to the Second Edition', in Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 2nd edn. (Routledge: London and New York, 2007), pp. xi-xxxviii (xii).

revolutionary thoughts in the face of quiz shows? Jan's musings on the role of television integrate the opinions of his own maker, those of director Weingartner who takes a similarly dim view of the social role of the idiot box as an instrument of technological rationality:

Die Verantwortlichen [die Programmacher] kopieren zunehmend billig produzierte Formate, die bereits im Ausland erfolgreich gelaufen sind. [...] Aber diese Formate sprechen größtenteils die niedrigsten Instinkte der Menschen an. Ich glaube, es ist gefährlich für die Demokratie, wenn das wichtigste Informationsmedium dermaßen verkommt.¹³

In other words, for the director and his on-screen counterpart television seeks only to nurture base, false instincts or, evoking another Marcusean taxonomy, a 'false consciousness' which numbs the individual to societal ills, notably articulated in the film in terms of the increasing gulf between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots,' the latter's increasing social marginalization and a sense that human solidarity has been all but eroded.

The continued and amplified validity of Marcuse's social critique might well be symptomatic of the concomitant, if much larger, success of its antagonist, as outlined by Kellner above, but its heightened currency with an '89er' is perhaps surprising. To be sure, Jan's case represents an exemplary model of contemporary resistance that is atypical of a generation tightly dependent on 'the system.' Moreover, Jan's worldview does not ignore the much larger framework informed by Marcuse's writings, namely the 68er movement, for which the importance of Marcuse was paramount. More than just an advocate of Marcuse, Jan is a true disciple of '68 and its legacy. The proto-commune he shares with Peter is adorned with posters which recall the 68er ethos ('keine Befreiung ohne Revolution') and advertise rallies against bomb

¹³ Bettina AUST, 'Medienkritiker Hans Weingartner: "Fernsehen ist Lebensersatz"', *Spiegel Online*. 16 November 2007 <<http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/kino/0,1518,druck-516833,00.html>> [accessed on 2 December 2007]

strikes in Iraq and the exploitation of the Third World. In his later encounter with the former 68er turned CEO, Hardenberg (Burghart Klaußner), he tests the latter's claim to radical credentials through his own knowledge of the structuring practices in the erstwhile SDS. Unlike the majority of his peers who have militated against the radicalized culture of suspicion embodied by the 68ers and their legacy, Jan appears to have immersed himself in the thoughts and values of this past; '68 becomes a signpost which, for Jan at least, might point the way out of the ideological and protest malaise of the Berlin Republic.

Jule has first hand experience of the overpowering weight of neo-liberal capitalist economics having been financially crippled by an impossible €100,000 debt after she crashed her uninsured Volkswagen into a company Mercedes. As she explains to Jan during an earlier meeting, she is now in effect owned by her creditor – the wealthy businessman Hardenberg whose car she wrote off. Although Jule views her financial subjugation to a man for whom her debt represents small change to be morally reprehensible, she has resigned herself to the fact that, in the eyes of the dominant system at least, she was in the wrong and that there is nothing she can do about it. For Jan, Jule's resignation to the established system is indicative of the way it has colonized her consciousness, successfully imposing its imperatives and rules upon her patterns of thought and behaviour – she is blinded by 'kleinbürgerliche Scheißmoral'. Jule's immediate goal is to become a teacher (perhaps also foreshadowing her eventual role as the third member of the 'Erziehungsberechtigten') but she has also conceived of a choice outside of the established system. Gradually softening to Jan, she explains 'eigentlich wollte ich einfach nur wild und frei leben.' But much like the coherence of youth subculture, Jule's attempt at self-determination, that is the construction of her own *Lebensgefühl* or sensibility for life, has 'dissolved

under the pressure of material constraints' to cite Dick Hebdige.¹⁴ Jule's power of imagination is subject to a greater power, that of the 'repressive reality principle' of late capitalism, to follow Marcuse's taxonomy, in which the reason of the hegemonic order prevails, having established itself as 'correct'.¹⁵

Jule's sense of social disenchantment is only furthered by her job which emphasizes Germany's rich/poor divide. Weingartner offers a scathing indictment of Berlin's 'haves', constructing the space where Jule works as a place of snobbery and social ignorance. Jule's efforts to serve the wealthy restaurant patrons are constantly met with disdain and, oftentimes, sheer contempt; she is berated for serving her social 'betters' brandy in liqueur glasses. Powerless to respond to their snide remarks in the dining area, Jule responds after work in an act of petty vandalism, keying the side of the party's expensive Mercedes in the parking lot, also a symbolic response to her creditor. Such acts led to accusations of 'Sozialneid' from domestic critics on the part of the filmmaker and his protagonists,¹⁶ but might Jule's outburst rather be symptomatic of what Weingartner refers to as the 'Grundproblem meiner Generation, dass wir in einem System fundiert sind, bei dem wir nicht wissen, an welchem Punkt wir es angreifen sollen.'¹⁷ Jule has a burgeoning consciousness of the suffocating hold that the neo-liberal capitalist system has over her, but she feels impotent because she has not yet been able to develop a means of dissenting that provides relief from its ignorance towards her real needs and desires. Her attack on a capitalist symbol par excellence provides a fleeting respite, an opportunity to come up for air.

In her defense, Jule is invested in trying to find a 'Punkt' from which to protest against the character of society, and so focus her dissatisfaction before Jan introduces

¹⁴ Dick HEBDIGE, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (Routledge: London, 1988), p. 35.

¹⁵ See Herbert MARCUSE, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Beacon Press: Boston, 1955), p. 142.

¹⁶ See KAMMERER, 'Die private Revolte ist nie privat'.

¹⁷ See GANSERA and GÖTTLER, 'Die Liebe in Zeiten der Matrix'.

her to his nocturnal activities in the homes of the wealthy. She is a regular at anti-globalisation rallies where she joins protesters to demonstrate against the exploitation of the child labourers who produce the expensive branded trainers that her peers voraciously consume. However, Jule's efforts appear unsuccessful: during one such rally in a Berlin shopping district which opens the film, the wider public is seemingly disinterested in the dubious hegemonic origins of its footwear. Consumerism would appear to have replaced scepticism, and the police soon arrive to disperse the small number of protesters ending in chaos and violence. The social situation that director Weingartner depicts continues to reverberate with Marcuse's contention that 'those minorities which strive for the change of the whole itself [...] will be left helpless and harmless in the face of the overwhelming majority, which militates against qualitative social change' because it is grounded in the satisfaction of false needs proliferated by the state.¹⁸ Furthermore, Jule's attempt to protest is telling of the state of political idealism in the new millennium and the sense of 'Orientierungslosigkeit' identified by the director among his own number. As Rupa Huq suggests,

the anti-globalisation protests of the early twentieth century are examples of [...] highly politicised groupings that would once have been termed 'subcultures' but are difficult to conceive of today. Their case is interesting because their message arguably lacks coherence as they are rather more *against* global capitalism than *for* any clearly defined set of aims or objectives.¹⁹

It is therefore not surprising that during their roof-top conversation Jule tells Jan 'das Problem ist einfach, daß ich nirgendwo etwas sehen kann, woran ich wirklich glaube', before asking him 'irgend'ne Idee, was man dagegen tun kann?' Jule's response here is a further symptom of the main thesis to Weingartner's film, namely 'where has the

¹⁸ MARCUSE, 'Repressive Tolerance', p. 94.

¹⁹ HUQ, *Beyond Subculture*, p. 21.

revolutionary energy of the youth gone? And how can we revitalize it?’²⁰ As Jule sees it, there are not any real youth movements or subcultures today because everyone has the feeling that it has all been said and done; others before them tried and failed, so why should it work for them now?

As Jan concedes, revolution has indeed become more difficult, pointing to the capricious fads of pop culture as part of the problem: ‘was früher subversiv war kannst du heute im laden kaufen – Che Guevara T-Shirts, Anarchiesticker!’ Technological rationality has colonized the revolutionary energy of previous radical alternatives and youth movements, repackaging them as disposable product; icons of active participation have returned as products of passive consumption. Thus, at the level of the local, Weingartner’s protagonists find themselves struggling to make a difference in a society in the grip of ‘Prada-Meinhof’ fever and, to further Jan’s citation of Guevara, the wider, global implications of ‘radical chic’ whereby the Argentinean-born ‘communist firebrand’ in particular has become a global ‘capitalist brand’, to borrow a chapter title from Alvaro Vargas Llosa.²¹ It is a situation in which, as Niels Werber suggests, ‘der Terrorismus wird so losgelöst von seiner historischen Umwelt, von seinem genuinen Kontext und selektiv für den Konsum der Gegenwart neu zurechtgemacht’.²² Indeed, briefly remaining with ‘radical chic’ on a global scale, in the first decade of the twentieth century the popular European fashion retailer *Ringspun* launched its ‘allstars’ range which saw the images of Jesus, Bruce Lee and Che Guevara reproduced on boxer-shorts, among other garments. Most recently, in 2004 the Hong Kong based company *How2Work Toys* released the ‘Che Guevara

²⁰ Cited in Sarah ROWLAND, ‘Revolutionary remodelling’, *Montreal Mirror*, Vol. 21, No 6, July 28-August 3 2005, <<http://www.montrealmirror.com/2005/072805/film1.html>> [accessed on July 7 2006]

²¹ See Alvaro Vargas LLOSA, *The Che Guevara Myth and the Future of Liberty* (Independent Institute, 2006).

²² Niels WERBER, *Vom Glück im Kampf*, <<http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/niels.werber/Antrittsvorlesung.htm>> [accessed on 28 July 2006]

Revolution Hero 12" Action Figure', complete with pistol, hand grenade and, of course, a cigar accessory that can be placed in the doll's mouth. The product description for the doll states 'this figure includes removable hat for recreating poses or abilities, capable of nearly any pose.'²³ And this, it seems, is the state of things in what has increasingly been identified as the post-ideological new millennium: rebellion has been reduced to a pose, to a vague decontextualised and containable, posture of social dissatisfaction. Rather than taking to the streets themselves, the 89ers can restage snap-shots of a (de)politicized past with their action figures at home. The scenario is evocative of Herbert Marcuse's theory of 'repressive tolerance': what was once subversive has now been co-opted by the capitalist system and its value is now determined by the market. The state can now sell radicalism to the youth, allowing them to feel dissident when in fact they are being interpolated by the system. Now swallowed up by capitalist machinery they can no longer represent genuine resistance. To wear a 'Prada-Meinhof' t-shirt or to own the Che Guevara action figure is in fact 'denen ihr Spiel zu spielen', to cite Diedrich Diederichson.

So, how can Weingartner's protagonists find a way to make a difference in the appropriating climate of pop culture when, as Katja Nicodemus of *die Zeit* puts it, 'alles wurde schon gedacht, gesagt, skandiert, kopiert und persifiliert'?²⁴ For Jan, the answer actually lays with past examples. This vociferous supporter of West Germany's ostensibly failed protest legacy exonerates it values, asserting to the disillusioned Jule that 'die besten Ideen überlebt haben.' As such, Jan's response simultaneously posits an extra-textual riposte to the controversial mission statement which had originally provided the conceptual locus for the disputed *RAF-Ausstellung*. Specifically, Jan and his partner in activism, Peter, have looked to the past, to an

²³ See the *How2Works Toys* website <<http://www.how2worktoys.com/main.html>> (accessed on 12 March 2006).

²⁴ Katja NICODEMUS, 'Denn sie wissen, was sie tun'.

example which echoes aspects of the 68ers to propose a way to revitalize revolutionary energy in an otherwise, at best, politically directionless and, at worst, apathetic youth. With a simple 'komm mit', Jan introduces Jule to the secret double life which he shares with her boyfriend Peter. By day they simply make up the numbers of the disenfranchised youth in society but by night they become the 'Erziehungsberechtigten'²⁵ and focus their frustration by breaking into the homes of the wealthy and rearranging the furniture as a 'new' form of protest against the consumer parables of capitalist society. As such, and as we shall now explore in detail, in doing so Jan and Peter are engaged in a direct attempt to recuperate, or perhaps more aptly, recycle certain aspects of the 68er's political radicalism which they feel is missing from their own generation. As we shall see, there are some ambiguities in their strategy of dissent, not least its hybrid mix of 68er values and the 89er cultural language of pop, but ultimately their careful 'vandalism' is a pop protest with ideological roots in a 68er sensibility, and to which we now turn.

'Phantasie wieder an die Macht'?

Supposedly out fly-posting at night, Jan and Peter have in fact been engaged in the 'education' of Berlin's bourgeois elite by breaking in to their luxury piles. But these self-styled 'Erziehungsberechtigten' do not steal, nor do they carry out mindless vandalism in their protest against the 'Zweiklassengesellschaft'. Rather they perform very careful 'vandalism', rearranging their victims' furniture as a form of political action. In this highly aesthetic form of activism designer chairs, sofas and tables are stacked on top of each other, high-end stereo equipment finds its way in to the fridge and expensive Meissen pottery turns up in the toilet. Notes are left as part of this

²⁵ In a wry turn, the name given to the group would seem to an answer 'the ironical question' posed by Marcuse in his diagnosis of society, namely 'who educates the educators (i.e. the political [and here we might also suggest the wealthy, CH] leaders).' MARCUSE, 'Repressive Tolerance', p. 104.

politicized act for the occupiers to find upon their return, stating either 'die fetten Jahre sind vorbei' or 'Sie haben zu viel Geld'. Jan and Peter's protest is evocative of the contemporary, youth-based 'culture jamming' movement, a rhetorical form of protest which 'seeks to undermine the marketing rhetoric of multinational corporations, specifically through such practices as media hoaxing, corporate sabotage, billboard "liberation," and trademark infringement', in the words of Christine Harold.²⁶ Examples of so-called billboard liberation, which are of particular relevance to our discussion thus far, include the modification of the globally recognizable *Nike* slogan to read 'Just do it... or else!' in a comment against the multinational's alleged sweat-shop practices in the Third World, or the defacement of advertisements for television programme's across Toronto which saw a spate of actor's faces amended to look like skulls with the added demand – 'Kill your TV!' Jan and Peter's imaginative attempts to subvert capitalism's cultural images and values, the aesthetic importance of which we will return to shortly, seems a very contemporary gesture, namely that of 'culture jamming', only writ large. They quite literally turn the trappings of capitalism on its head in the homes of the wealthy, subverting the comfort that the elite gains from its consumer wares into disconcertion.

Arguably, however, this 'most modern' of politicized gestures is actually not that new. Indeed, the guerilla form of communication of 'culture jamming', as well as, moreover, Jan and Peter's personal spin on it, would seem to be indebted to the anti-authoritarian protest tradition of the 1960s, specifically evoking the 'Spaßguerilla' concept foregrounded by the members of West Berlin's *Kommune I* (KI) whose members pioneered a humorous, self-styled brand of praxis which advocated 'the taunting of authority by non-violent means of argument, demonstration

²⁶ Christine HAROLD, 'Pranking rhetoric: "culture jamming" as media activism'. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21:3 (2004), pp. 189-211 (190).

and symbolic action', to quote Burns and van der Will.²⁷ The satirical content of KI's 'political happenings' – such as the theatrical 'Pudding-Attentat', or the Shah of Iran and his wife being met by a sea of protesters wearing caricatured paper masks in their image – was designed to expose the absurdity of those who held positions of authority and social influence and thus 'create contexts of political enlightenment.'²⁸ Although Peter and Jan's audience is limited, there is a didactic element, when naïve, in their satirizing of the lifestyles of Berlin's affluent elite which, the duo hopes, will take a long hard look in the mirror after their visit. They wish to provoke by unsettling the wealthy where they should feel most secure behind their gated communities and, they assume, impregnable homes which house the material objects pointing to their financial success. As such, Jan and Peter's activism goes beyond the rhetorical protest of 'culture jamming' which, although it is undeniably an attempt to speak back, targets faceless multinational companies. Their protest refuses to fit in, that is it refuses to play by the rules of the established system which, as we saw at the beginning of the film, has successfully incorporated the traditional protest routes of Jule and her fellow anti-globalisation marchers. Jan and Peter still hold out hope for the possibility of utopian change. Specifically, their imaginative violation of the rules of the game evokes a clarion call of the 68ers: *Phantasie an die Macht!* or 'All Power to the Imagination!'

With their cries of *Phantasie an die Macht!* the West German Student Movement seized upon the power of the imagination to break the 'false consciousness' propagated by the state. The liberating potential of the imagination had been held open by Marcuse who viewed it as progressive form of gratification. As Sabine von Dirke suggests, it fed directly into the students' 'preeminent goal', namely

²⁷ BURNS and VAN DER WILL, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany*, p. 109.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

‘shaking off the shackles of internal repression and external oppression in all of its contemporary forms’.²⁹ However, it was Peter Schneider who, going a step further than Marcuse, theorized exactly how imagination might fulfil its potential and act as a productive force capable of overcoming the repressive reality principle of late capitalism. At this juncture I am indebted to von Dirke’s concise summary of Schneider’s 1969 essay *Die Phantasie im Spätkapitalismus und die Kulturrevolution*.³⁰

For Schneider, emancipation from capitalist repression represents only a question of turning imagination into a productive force against the repressive reality principle. The student movement’s emphasis on imagination, which Schneider’s essay articulates, reflects its demands for the transformation of society through the liberation of the creative faculties and libidinal energies of the human being. The slogan “All Power to the Imagination!” calls for the transformation of imagination into revolutionary energy and aims at overthrowing the repressive reality principle on the individual and collective level.³¹

Jan and Peter’s protest also reflects such demands. This desire to turn imagination into revolutionary energy with individual and collective liberating potentialities is undeniably shared by Jan and Peter. What follows is an exploration of how exactly their aesthetic activism might be read as following this agenda.

Marcuse had privileged art for its apparent power to resist the reality principle of capitalism; aesthetic form preserves unsublimated content beneath its sublimated form or, in other words, ‘art’s function as a sanctuary for desires and ideals repressed by the hegemonic bourgeois culture.’³² But this is one area where the students and

²⁹ VON DIRKE, *All Power to the Imagination!*, p. 38. For a more detailed exploration of the importance of ‘imagination’ to the Student Movement, see *ibid.*, pp. 37-43.

³⁰ Peter SCHNEIDER, ‘Die Phantasie im Spätkapitalismus und die Kulturrevolution’. in *Atempause: Versuch, meine Gedanken über Literatur und Kunst zu ordnen* (Rohwohlt: Hamburg, 1977). pp. 127-161. First published in *Kursbuch* 16 (1969), pp. 1-37.

³¹ VON DIRKE, *All Power to the Imagination!* p. 41.

³² *Ibid.*, p.42.

Marcuse disagreed, with the former somewhat dramatically declaring the death of art. For the students, art no longer protected unrealized desires from the grip of the reality principle, but served its inverse; it protected the reality principle from the mobilization of desires ('die Kunst im Spätkapitalismus bewahrt nicht mehr die Wünsche vor dem Zugriff des Realitätsprinzip, sondern umgekehrt: sie bewahrt das Realitätsprinzip vor der Revolte der Wünsche'³³). Art thus becomes a mere holding pen for utopian images which consolidates the contradiction between desires and reality, rather than challenging it. 'Hence bourgeois art', as von Dirke suggests, 'directly feeds into the capitalist order. It shows the masses their suffering solely for the purpose of adjusting them to it.'³⁴ But although Schneider agrees that, in this regard, 'die spätbürgerliche Kunst tot ist', he refutes the notion that 'die Kunst überhaupt tot ist.' For Schneider: 'zwei Funktionen lassen sich für eine revolutionäre Kunst angeben: die agitorische und die propagandistische Funktion der Kunst.'³⁵ The aesthetic activism of the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' might therefore be read as corresponding to Schneider's insistence that 'die Kunst die Wünsche gegen den Kapitalismus mobilisieren [muß]' through an agit-function, which he expounds upon in more detail as follows:

Dazu gehört aber beides: daß sie [die Kunst] die Wünsche darstellt, und daß sie den Kapitalismus darstellt, daß sie die konkreten Bilder der Wirklichkeit gegen die konkreten Bilder der Möglichkeiten hält, die darin stecken und ersticken. Bei dieser Konfrontation müssen die Wünsche aber von ihrer künstlerischen Form so weit wie möglich freigehalten werden, damit sie ihre politische Form finden können. Aufgabe der Kunst ist es nicht, die Wünsche künstlerisch zu organisieren, sondern sie aus der Verdrängung hervorzuholen, um sie in ihrer Rohform der Revolution zuzuführen.³⁶

³³ SCHNEIDER, 'Die Phantasie im Spätkapitalismus und die Kulturrevolution', p. 152.

³⁴ VON DIRKE, *All Power to the Imagination!*, p. 42.

³⁵ SCHNEIDER, 'Die Phantasie im Spätkapitalismus und die Kulturrevolution', p. 154.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55.

This is a concept which resonates strongly with the aesthetic strategy behind the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' form of protest. The film's depiction of the homes of the rich as large and predominantly white, sterile spaces may itself be a naïve strategy, but it nonetheless lends Jan and Peter a blank canvas on which to create their agit-'art'. The monolithic structures the pair creates out of the vast array of consumer products to hand are not dissimilar to the art installations one might see at a gallery and through this aesthetic, when not intentionally artistic, expression, the group articulates its opposition to hegemonic bourgeois culture: the structures they create find a political form which juxtaposes their desire to turn the capitalist order on its head against the reality of life under the conditions of late capitalism. A pertinent example here is that of the Meissen statues which find their way in to the toilet. No longer do these reproductions of revolutionary soldiers show the adjusted suffering of the masses. Rather they point to the actual conditions of capitalism in which the unfulfilled desires depicted by these figures have been successfully contained, when not completely flushed away. The utopian potential which these figures should represent, but which was neutralized, is revitalized by Jan and Peter who play them against the very system that they are supposed to safeguard.

Furthermore, drawing on the example of the automobile, Schneider distinguishes between an object of human production's 'Gebrauchswert', its value of utility, vis-à-vis its 'Tauschwert', or value of commodity, in late capitalism. Schneider notes the way in which, under late capitalism, technical improvements to the automobile have increasingly come to predicated on their 'Verkäuflichkeit', or commodity potential, rather than their 'Brauchbarkeit', or usefulness. meaning that 'entsprechend werden die Bedürfnisse der Autokäufer darauf ausgerichtet, das Auto

immer mehr als Tauschwert und immer weniger als Gebrauchswert anzuwenden.³⁷ For Schneider 'kein Gabel, kein Hemd, kein Schuh, kein Haus, keine Straße, keine Stadt, keine Produkt menschlicher Tätigkeit, dem man nicht ansähe, daß es nicht dazu ist, gebraucht, sondern verkauft zu werden.'³⁸ In Schneider's view, the cars which burned on the barricade lines at the height of the unrest in '68 in Paris 'zeigten eine erste Anwendung des Gebrauchswerts Auto unter den Bedingungen des Spätkapitalismus.'³⁹ Accordingly, the appropriation of the numerous consumer goods by Jan and Peter in their aesthetic dissent shatters their consumer meaning or 'Warengesicht'. Jan and Peter take the conditions of life in late capitalism in the form of consumables but then subvert them, liberating them from their 'Tauschwert' and, in Schneider's terminology, return them to a 'Gebrauchswert'.

As we mentioned above, however, there was still a feeling among sectors of Germany's newspaper critics that Jan and his companions were leading a private campaign against the rich, motivated mainly by social jealousy.⁴⁰ Weingartner, in a somewhat tit for tat riposte, suggested that "'Sozialneid" ist ein Kampfbegriff der Rechten und der vermögenden Schichten', before, in a more measured response, going on to insist that 'Bei diesen Leuten in die Villen einzudringen ist eine symbolische Aktion.' Evoking the famous KI motto – 'das Private ist politisch!' – Weingartner consolidated his defense by insisting that 'die private Revolte ist in Wahrheit nie privat, sondern hat gesellschaftliche Dimensionen.'⁴¹ Although Peter and Jan's colourful form of activism is still in its infancy when we join the narrative, the duo is building towards a collective social statement. Peter is overjoyed to discover that their nocturnal activities have made newspaper copy, even if only a few

³⁷ Ibid., p. 150.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 151.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See KAMMERER, 'Die private Revolte ist nie privat'.

⁴¹ Ibid.

column inches have been devoted to their remodelling of the homes of the wealthy and influential, and hopes that they will ultimately inspire imitators. Jan, however, has much larger ambitions. The break-ins only represent the first stage of their programme. At the end of the film the trio of Jan, Peter and Jule travel to a remote Mediterranean island with the intention of disabling one of Europe's main television satellite receivers. Although we never see the outcome of their attempt, with this operation the film ends on a utopian note as the three friends, freed of their subjugation to the system travel off to free the masses from the technological control of television. By abruptly cutting off one of the state's chief apparatus of control they hope to free the revolutionary behaviour of the masses. That is the wider aim, and admittedly a problematically naïve one. But the journey to liberation begins with the individual.

Indeed, the unapologetic focus on the lives Jan, Peter and Jule might have inadvertently fuelled the critical community's suspicions of a private campaign of petty terror motivated by jealousy, but arguably the trio has to liberate itself before it can aim higher. This was certainly true of the rebellious model proffered by the legacy of '68 in which, as Burns and van der Will note, 'the idea of liberation which was the foundation of anti-authoritarian thinking concentrated on the ideological and psychic incarcerations of the individual.'⁴² As we have seen, Jan shares Jule's frustration with traditional forms of protest which have seemingly turned into their opposite by adhering to the rules of the game. However, by channelling his creative energies into a form of protest which falls outside of the 'repressive tolerance' of 'the system', Jan appears to be a step further in liberating himself from the capitalist repression that he had previously felt overwhelmingly subject to – it maximizes his

⁴² BURNS and VAN DER WILL, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany*, p. 122.

individual sense of freedom. Our introduction to Jan sees him travelling by tram through Berlin where he is visibly troubled by the lack of human solidarity in contemporary German society. Although he does not possess a travel card, a passive and presumably homeless drunk is unnecessarily harassed by the ticket inspectors. Jan intervenes, daring to challenge the inspectors before departing the tram after he has given his ticket to the drunk. For his act of kindness Jan is pursued by the oppressive officials and nearly becomes embroiled in a fight. Jan manages to repress his anger and retreats home. Jan's powerlessness to focus his anger at the conditions of society is exemplified when he returns to the WG he shares with Peter. Slamming the door to his room behind him he plays a thrash metal track at full volume and, even more tellingly, hooks himself up to an oxygen machine. Although the scene is played with a deft comic touch, the implications of this gesture are nonetheless clear; the apparent destruction of human solidarity and Jan's own evacuated sense of individual subjectivity under the totalizing rationality of the hegemonic order have become a suffocating peril for this twenty-something. Jan's reaction follows Weingartner's belief that 'wenn ich, [...] als Mensch dieses Gefühl habe, es stimmt etwas nicht mit der Welt, bin ich nicht glücklich, ich bin wütend, dann muss dieses Gefühl raus, in Aktion umgesetzt werden, weil man sonst krank wird.'⁴³ But through his aesthetic 'praxis', Jan has found the focus he needed to channel his feeling of outrage. Jan's otherwise repressed sense of anger and suppressed creative energies are transformed, he believes, into revolutionary energy which has liberated him from the reality principle on the individual level. His remodelling of luxury homes allows him to come up for air without the aid of a respirator. After a successful mission with Peter,

⁴³ See KAMMERER, 'Die private Revolte ist nie privat'.

both young men are energized. Jan strips his shirt off and screams at the top of his lungs from the window of their beaten up camper van.

Through Jan's tutelage, Jule is similarly liberated in the first step towards collective emancipation outlined above. When she is brought into the fold she similarly experiences the same sense of exhilaration and release which her participation in the anti-globalisation rallies could not grant her because they fed into the capitalist machine, helping to confirm the established order.

At this juncture it would be useful to consider further some of the implications of this rediscovery of a 68er 'brand' of political thought and form for the pop-generation of '89. For Gustav Seibt, the protest of the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' was nothing more than a 'Pubertätsgeste' which was 'politisch betrachtet, sinnlos', and so to be dismissed as what he terms 'Revolutionspop'. Unquestionably, the language of Jan and Peter's re-launching of a 68er form of radical protest is rooted in the appropriating paroles of the pop aesthetic. Indeed, the very notion of 're-launching' stands at the very core of pop culture which recycles the past in order to sell it on. Arguably, the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' have gone shopping for an ideology, but what the 68ers wanted and did is kept in the foreground by Jan who provides a contextual and political link to that past. Furthermore, we might ask what other choice they have apart from recycling. The 78er pop-theorist Diedrich Diederichson identifies the problem of finding ways to beat the system, that is of coming 'weiter' for the generational successors to the 68ers when, as Jule laments, it all appears to have been said and done, and failed. As Diederichson suggests of his own generation, 'bei uns gab es kein richtiges *Weiter* mehr. Denn wir wollten ja weiter mit Hilfe der Mitte, die uns vergangene Generationen hinterlassen hatten.'⁴⁴ Here we might usefully recall

⁴⁴ DIEDERICHSON, *Sexbeat*, p. 20.

Cooke's dichotomy in relation to the rediscovery of West Germany's terrorist past in 89er pop culture, which he suggests 'might be seen as a statement by the 89ers of their feelings of loss, an attempt to recuperate certain aspects of the 68ers political radicalism, which they feel is missing from their own lives, in the only cultural language to which they have access.'⁴⁵ As we suggested in Chapter 4, the overriding apolitical appropriation of the terrorist past in the slogan t-shirts of the 'Prada-Meinhof' phenomenon might actually refute such a claim. However, it is more than apt on the case of Jan and his band of revolutionary re-modellers who mix the language of '68 with the pop language of 'culture jamming'. However naïve, the end result is a politicized act and so if theirs is to be a pop protest as Seibt suggests, then it is surely a pop-protest with content.

Paradoxically then, Jan looks back to a 'failed' revolution in order to come forward and work towards a revolution of his own. But this does not prove problematic for the director who views '68 less as 'eine glücklich gescheiterte Revolution',⁴⁶ to return to Leggewie's label, than one which was too quick to concede and play by the rules of the game: 'die 68er Revolution hat sehr viel bewegt, aber im Endeffekt ist sie nicht weit genug gegangen. Hat zu schnell den Marsch durch die Institutionen angetreten. Die Grundlegenden Prinzipien des kapitalistischen Systems haben sich nicht geändert.'⁴⁷ The suggestion would seem to be that the 68er movement was less a failure because its methods were wrong than because it failed to stick to its guns. As such, the activities of the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' might be less a recycling of a past protest form than a continuation from the point it left off. At any rate, it provides a possible avenue for the youth to focus its sense of disenfranchisement.

⁴⁵ COOKE, *Representing East Germany since Unification*, p. 120.

⁴⁶ LEGGEWIE, '1968 ist Geschichte', p. 5.

⁴⁷ KAMMERER, 'Die private Revolte ist nie privat'.

High sein, frei sein, muss ein bißchen Terror dabei sein?

Although Weingartner exonerates '1968' as a mythic moment of utopian potential, his protagonists' search through West Germany's radical past for liberating forms of protest brings them into contact with the cultural memory of the 'Achilles heel' of the 68er legacy, to quote Ingo Cornils; namely the 'armed struggle' of urban terrorism which followed in the temporal wake of the Student Movement.⁴⁸ However, before I examine the specific engagement that the film takes up with the RAF legacy, it will first be necessary to consider briefly the events that lead Weingartner's 89ers to contemplate terror.

Jule's introduction to the surreptitious night-time activities of Jan and her boyfriend Peter occurs while Peter is away in Madrid. Jule's initial trepidation quickly fades when she recognizes one of the names on their 'hit-list' is her creditor, the rich CEO Hardenberg whose company Mercedes she wrote off. She persuades Jan to 'educate' Hardenberg ahead of schedule and so the two of them head off to remodel his home, but on the understanding, as Jan makes clear, that they stick to the groups rules – 'wir machen sie die Erziehungsberechtigten.' In the usual vein, the sterile villa is turned on its head with, not the stereo, but this time a photograph of the wealthy industrialist finding its way into the fridge after Jule determines that he could do to 'cool off.' The task complete, the now standard calling card adds the final touch. But feeling energized through the liberation of her libidinal or life instincts, Jule is unwilling to stop there and what follows would appear to represent a slide away from the group's ideals. For the first time the very careful 'vandalism' of the group turns into outright destruction. Jule enlists Jan's help to throw an expensive sofa into the indoor pool before insouciantly destroying bottles of the home-owner's vintage wine. On this occasion the critical community's problem with the film seems all the more

⁴⁸ CORNILS, 'Joined at the Hip?' (forthcoming).

understandable. Jule's destructive gestures are highly ambivalent and would seem to be less a rebellion against wider social ills than her own personal set of circumstances. Furthermore, Jan gets in on the act. Having been dragged into the pool along with the sofa, much to Jule's amusement, he drags his accomplice in after him in a clichéd act of playful retaliation. Laughing and shouting they splash around, drink Hardenberg's champagne, and wear his monogrammed bath robes, but in doing so is the pair not participating hypocritically in Hardenberg's capitalist success? However, the apparent compromise of Jan's ideological imperatives is less an expression of social jealousy, but of his burgeoning love for Jule – a love which she is quick to reciprocate. Jule discovers the photograph of herself that Jan has been carrying around in his pocket and, after teasing him about it, they share a kiss in the pool. Hardenberg's villa becomes the setting for their anarchic first date.

The film that became *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* had originally been conceived by Weingartner to be a straight forward love story. Although Weingartner ultimately decided that something was lacking and so developed the film's political thread, the elements of a love story are still central to the film. For Weingartner the 'utopischer Touch' between Jan, Peter and Jule meant that the film 'ist [...] auch ein modernes Märchen'.⁴⁹ Undeniably, however, the fairytale quality of their young love collides with their utopian politics. Earlier in the film, Jan jokes to Jule that grass 'curtails the revolutionary energy of the youth', but more to the point it would seem that their deceitful liaison behind Peter's back actually leads to the slide from 'revolutionary energy' within Jan to what appears, at least, to be a delinquent act of vandalism. However, in another ambiguous gesture the director, who on the one hand privileges the 'utopian touch' of this love story, does not in fact allow Jan and Jule to

⁴⁹ See GANSERA and GÖTTLER, 'Die Liebe in Zeiten der Matrix'.

go unpunished for deviating from the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' path. Their loss of political focus in favour of the euphoria of the moment means that they get sloppy: Jule's cathartic sense of release is cut short when she later realizes that she left her mobile phone at the scene of the crime leading to an ill-fated return journey to the villa. This time they are caught in the act by Hardenberg. 'Poetischer Widerstand' gives way to the weight surrounding the illegality of the act and, as Hardenberg wrestles with Jule whom he has recognized, Jan crosses the thin line between provocation and violence, purposefully knocking Hardenberg unconscious in a moment of desperation.

Arguably echoing the terrorists of the RAF for whom, as Jeremy Varon avers, the urgency of survival increasingly took precedence 'over ideological and moral considerations', from this point on the friends are 'driven not by any grand design but by the pressures of illegality'.⁵⁰ The structural terrorism of their earlier protest is replaced with what threatens to become pure terror as they race to save their own skins. With Peter's aid they kidnap Hardenberg, who had already come close to successfully calling the police, and relocate to a remote cabin in the Austrian mountains, which Peter christens their 'Volksgefängnis'. Peter in particular seems to relish the power that their ostensible slide into terror appears to have granted him, and had previously cast a dubious shadow over the ideals of the group's revolt. Recalling the journalist Butz Peters description of Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader as 'Kopf und Bauch' of the RAF, the sharply politically motivated and would-be ideologue Jan resembled the 'Kopf' of the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' protest whereas Peter had already shown evidence of a delinquent streak which informed Baader's moniker as the 'Bauch' of the terrorist cadre. After a successful action Jan discovers that Peter

⁵⁰ VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 209.

had ‘liberated’ a €5000 watch from their latest target. Clearly annoyed, Jan forcefully reminds Peter of the ‘Prinzip’ which underpins their endeavour, stating that if the recipients of their ‘education’ take them for run-of-the-mill burglars, ‘dann ist alles für einen Arsch.’

If, as Martina Knoblen remarks, ‘wenn Jan etwa über die “kapitalistische Diktatur des Systems” räsoniert, klingt das wie aus einem Wörterbuch der 68er’, then Peter is equally well versed in the specifics of the terrorist legacy.¹ From their ‘Volksgefängnis’ in the Austrian Vorarlberg, the charismatic Peter gestures to Germany’s terrorist legacy as the possible solution to their problem, asking his now partners in crime, ‘Wie wäre es mit einer politischen Entführung in siebziger Style?’ Clearly recalling both the ‘political’ kidnapping of CDU mayoral candidate Peter Lorenz by the *Bewegung 2. Juni* and the subsequent kidnapping of Hanns Martin Schleyer by the RAF, the suggestion is that they hang a sign around his neck declaring his status as a prisoner of the ‘Erziehungsberechtigten’, tape it and send it to the press.⁵¹ A consummate joker, it is difficult to always take Peter at his word but worryingly he also suggests that, with Hardenberg, they have a living subject with which to test their ‘methods’, though neither Jan nor Jule seem to know quite what he means by this, and neither is it expanded upon for the spectator. One possible explanation is a flirtation with the readiness for extreme violence which had categorized the RAF. To the shock of his friends, Peter produces a handgun and coolly suggests ‘wir machen ihn kalt.’ Joking aside, Jule and Jan are outraged at the suggestion but they do advocate the continued presence of the gun, which Peter assures them is not actually loaded, to maintain their illusion of power over their

⁵¹ On 27 February 1975 Peter Lorenz the CDU mayoral candidate for Berlin was kidnapped by *Bewegung 2. Juni* in an attempt to force the release of imprisoned comrades and to grant safe passage to the Yemen Republic. Both captives appeared in video messages with signs around their necks declaring them to be prisoners of their respective captors.

captor who, in truth, is the one holding the cards. Even if the threat posed by the gun never exceeds the realm of the symbolic, it nonetheless points to a further condition of Germany's terrorist past whereby, as Varon notes of the RAF, 'violence of an increasingly destructive sort would be required to sustain the illusion of power.'⁵² Hardenberg is unaware that the gun has been stripped of its life-rending potential and so the threat it poses to his life is taken to be very real, particularly when he is taken down to a telephone box at gun-point to explain away his prolonged absence to his maid. In interview, Weingartner suggested that 'wenn die Radikalen ihren Humor verlieren, wird es immer gefährlich.'⁵³ Evocative of the shift from the playful provocation of the counter-culture to the bleak politics of the RAF, this statement also rings true of Jan and his friends. Peter might initially thrive on the dissident status of the RAF in cultural memory but as the situation becomes all the more serious for Jan and his friends, the film exposes the dangerous potential of which lurks behind the positive appropriation of the terrorists' negative aura in the cultural memory of the youth.

The terrorization of Hardenberg points to a qualitative difference between the previous, structurally terroristic but light-hearted protest of the trio, and its subsequent, violent form of coercion. Reproaching his young captors for redeploying the terrorists' methods of spreading fear and anxiety, Hardenberg denounces them as trying to be 'die RAF des neuen Jahrtausends.' Hardenberg's rebuke is all the more pertinent if we consider the recent descent into violence among fringe groups around the anti-globalisation movement which preceded the 2007 G8 summit held at Heiligendamm on Germany's Baltic coast. In the nearby city of Rostock masked protestors clashed with police in very violent demonstrations prompting fears that the

⁵² VARON, *Bringing the War Home*, p. 206.

⁵³ Cited in Christiane PEITZ and Jan SCHULZ-OJALA, 'Radikalen brauchen Humor', *Tagesspiegel*, 7 July 2005.

assorted ‘G-8-Gegner [sich] jetzt erst recht radikalisieren’, as *Die Welt* reported, and leading the police to speculate about the emergence of extreme left-wing ‘Gruppen mit Potenzial zum Terror’.⁵⁴ Unsurprisingly then, a RAF connection was quickly rehearsed in the public sphere – aided in no small part by the appearance of the former terrorists Inge Viett and Ralf Reinders at a pre-G8 rally in Berlin – with the CDU politician Philipp Mißfelder suggesting ‘dass es gut drei Jahrzehnte nach dem Terror durch die Rote Armee Fraktion offenbar erneut starke linksextremistische Strömungen in Deutschland gibt.’⁵⁵ Although the storm over this assumed potential for renewed terror abated, violence, whether militant or otherwise, is a distinct possibility among a youth cohort struggling to find a way to make its opinions heard in the face of the capitalist system which they believe creates violence through the oppression and exploitation of the Third World.

Jan, Jule and Peter, then, find themselves staring into a precipice that might signal the descent from provocative but peaceful activism into the underground of a nascent terrorism of their own making. Ultimately, however, their flirtation with the choices offered by West Germany’s legacy of urban terrorism is rejected after a dialogue is established with Hardenberg which goes beyond tit-for-tat reproaches as both sides seek to make the best of their present situation. Having apparently warmed to his captors, the imprisoned CEO softens his earlier reproach, and while he maintains that ‘ich es nicht richtig [finde], was ihr mit mir macht,’ he also concedes ‘aber euer Idealismus, vor dem habe ich Respekt.’ His attitude here mirrors that of Volker Schlöndorff whose *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* explores the filmmaker’s

⁵⁴ ‘G-8-Gegner sollen "Exekutionen" erwogen haben’, *Die Welt Online*, 10 May 2007
<http://www.welt.de/politik/article864740/G-8-Gegner_sollen_Exekutionen_erwogen_haben.html>
[accessed on 5 June 2007]

⁵⁵ ‘Mißfelder verteidigt RAF-Vergleich’. *Yahoo news.de*, 24 May 2007
<<http://de.news.yahoo.com/24052007/336-missfelder-verteidigt-raf-vegleich.html>> [accessed on 25 July 2007]

contention that, although terrorism was wrong, the idealism which informed it was a valid idea. But unlike Rita whose worldview leads her to take a life, Weingartner's trio does not cross the same fatal line, thus allowing them to take a step back and attempt to rediscover their 68er-influenced idealism after they recognize, as Jan asserts, that 'wir nur Scheiße gebaut haben.' As we turn to the next section of this chapter, we will see that, in the example of Hardenberg, the question of what is 'Left' for these young revolutionaries becomes all the more complicated.

'Deine Zeit ist abgelaufen, Manager: when the myth of '1968' confronts its socio-political outcome

Initially, the verbal confrontation between the wealthy state representative and his now 'terrorist' kidnappers in the Tirol appears to represent a dialogic regression in comparison to aforementioned texts such as Andres Veiel's *Black Box BRD*, as both sides entrench themselves in the 'Täter'/'Opfer' binary that had emerged as a defining characteristic of the cultural memory of the RAF. The attitudes of Jan and his friends move increasingly towards a confluence of political infantilism, choosing to view the situation as they do in the terms of Holger Meins' famous parole: 'entweder du bist ein Teil des Problems, oder ein Teil der Lösung!' Jule berates their prisoner for amassing 'große, teure Dinge' with his €3.4 million salary when Third World workers cannot afford the bus to the neighbouring town. For Jule and her friends the solution is simple – wipe out the international debt owed by the poorer countries. Hardenberg, however, remains adamant that this would cause the collapse of the world financial system. He refuses to justify his spending habits which are his democratic right and attacks his captors' methods. But, as we shall see, this deadlocked ideological incompatibility is at once eased *and* complicated by Hardenberg's shock-claim to be an 'alt-68er', a member of the very generation whose worldview had formed the backbone of the trio's earlier protest gesture, and which, to

these young activists, seems an inconceivable point of origin for a man who is now a top-capitalist.

Given the recent, beleaguered nature of the 68er past in German society, it would seem deeply ironic that a former 68er should have become the target of a ‘political’ kidnapping in Weingartner’s film: the left-wing interrogators of the late 1960s and 1970s are now themselves being interrogated over their contribution to German society in light of generational shifts, a situation previously highlighted in our discussion of Christian Petzold’s *Die innere Sicherheit*. Unlike Jeanne, however, Hardenberg’s 89er interrogators have been actively engaged in an attempt to recuperate the political engagement that underpinned the 68er movement and gave its members a sense of purpose. Indeed, Jan and his companions are not troubled by what Hardenberg might have done during his alleged radical past but rather what he has become, that is one of the many countercultural 68ers who set out to change the world but who have long since been integrated, and ostensibly happily so, into hegemonic bourgeois life. In this section, I examine the ambivalent status of ‘1968’ as myth versus its socio-political reality in the new millennium for Weingartner’s protagonists.

Hardenberg, as far as he maintains, is not just any ‘alt-68er’; affiliated with the upper echelons the SDS, the activist turned top-manager claims to have been a close personal friend of the charismatic student leader Rudi Dutschke. The shared interest in the 68er past softens the hitherto polar opposition between the two sides, opening up a opportunity for a more balanced dialogue with Jan in particular who is keen to discover what turned a man who lived the ‘high’ life and regularly swapped partners with his now wife, into an over-weight, over-stressed industrialist whose car holds greater value than the life its repair bill has crippled. For Hardenberg the change is a result of a collision between idealism and reality, meaning that in the end you have to

play by the rules of ‘the system’s’ game: you suddenly need a reliable car instead of an old ‘banger’, then you get married, have children and need a career to offer them security until, one day, ‘du [stehst] in der Wahlkabine und für die CDU das Kreuz machst.’

According to Weingartner the decision to make Hardenberg a former student activist was a matter of cinematic realism, an attempt to break the cliché of the rich CEO as a mere one-dimensional caricature of state power: ‘das gehört eben zu den Herausforderungen der Realität – dass ein Topmanager nicht so ein mieses Schwein ist, sondern ein kultivierter Mensch. Der als Student irgendwie ein wilder Hund war [...]’⁵⁶ Evocative of the now ubiquitous *Spiegel* neologism – ‘Joschkas wilde Jahre’ – Hardenberg (played by Burghart Klaußner) certainly bears more than a passing resemblance to the former Foreign Minister and former student radical Fischer, albeit before he took to the streets, but this time with his now famous running shoes instead of anti-capitalist slogans, in a bid to shed excess pounds. Initially, ‘1968’ and the utopian idealism of its ‘wilde Jahre’ posits a generational confluence between Hardenberg and his captors through which, for a time at least, Weingartner’s narrative might even be said to establish a liminal space of generational reconciliation between the ‘staatstragenden “Yesterday’s Heroes” der 68er’ and those who would designate them so, namely the 89ers who feel that the continued cultural hegemony of the former student radicals in the Berlin Republic threatens their own significance.⁵⁷ Indeed, the tension between the ‘new’ and ‘old’ radicals soon thaws and before long they are trading stories over communal spliffs – without any fears that they might sap revolutionary energy – and playing cards together. Hardenberg who, paradoxically, begins to feel increasingly free through his captivity comes in to his own and assumes

⁵⁶ GANSERA and GÖTTLER, ‘Die Liebe in Zeiten der Matrix’.

⁵⁷ Cited in TABERNER, ‘Introduction: German Literature in the Age of Globalisation’, p. 10.

a paternal, even guiding role in the running of their log cabin commune in the wilderness and taking over the cooking duties. This burgeoning sense of family, which might offer its own utopian enactment of a generational reconciliation, is consolidated when the group travels to a telephone box in the nearest village so that Hardenberg can call home. We share the apprehension felt by Jan, for whom close-ups of villagers' faces hold accusatory glances and the risk of discovery. But Hardenberg, or 'Hardi' as Peter has taken to calling him, plays his part brilliantly, credibly passing off Jan as his son when a local resident becomes too friendly, and thus creating a generational imaginary of a harmonious 68er/89er family album.

Hardenberg, for whom the kidnapping becomes a holiday of sorts and allows for a nostalgic revisitation of his past life, is revitalized, feeding off the familiar idealism reawakened in him by the young 89ers. He relishes his relocation and a simpler way of life freed from the strictures of his stressful career which he claims to have often considered abandoning in favour of a teaching post in the countryside with his wife, in a bid to revitalize their strained relationship. Mirroring the place previously occupied by Jan and his companions, a euphoric Hardenberg hangs out of the window of the camper van and sings out loud now that his long since repressed sensibility for life has been let out for a well needed vacation. However, that is all Hardenberg's revisitation of his own lost idealism ever amounts to – a vacation. This highly ambivalent character who traded in his radicalism for a quick march up the corporate ladder is ultimately unwilling to recuperate his former worldview. Shocked by their own moral bankruptcy, the trio returns Hardenberg to his villa. As they turn to leave Jule rushes back, realizing that Hardenberg had forgotten his jumper. In exchange he gives her a signed affidavit neutralizing the crippling debt she had owed. But this symbolic gesture of reconciliation is itself quickly nullified by Hardenberg

who, returned to his bourgeois self, turns on his new 'friends'. Hardenberg makes one last visit to the trio at their Berlin WG, but in his 'true' identity of a high-powered industrialist with the state apparatus at his disposal. Indeed, flanked by a massive police SWAT team, the hysterical scale of which recalls Schlöndorff's ridiculing of the state response to terrorism in *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*, Hardenberg's overdetermined response says less about the potential for terror posed by the 'Erziehungsberechtigten' than his own importance within the hegemonic system which he now seeks to safeguard. Weingartner is in no doubt about Hardenberg's true colours, stating that 'Er ja seine ganze Identität aufgeben [müsste], wenn er die drei nicht anzeigt.'⁵⁸ The radical past is ultimately an inaccessible foreign country for the former 68er, whose previous life has been rigidly colonized by the capitalist epithets he had claimed to feel trapped by.

When asked if Hardenberg represented a denouncement of the 'generation of '68', Weingartner suggested that 'Generalvorwürfe sind nicht meine Sache.'⁵⁹ In his exploration of the state of political idealism in the Berlin Republic among his own generation, the director would seem to be equally critical of the 68ers slide from away from the political engagement of their youth but, as he claims, this does not represent a 'Generalvorwurf' against their legacy, as such. While critical of what the 68ers have ostensibly become, Weingartner exonerates the myth of '1968' as a moment of utopian potential when anything seemed possible. Even if the trajectories of many of the protest generation's figures can no longer be regarded as totemic resources for subsequent generations, the core values which categorised '68' can. The 'Erziehungsberechtigten' seem to recognize this. Pre-empting Hardenberg's change of heart, or rather ideology, they have fled Berlin, leaving behind a final slogan which

⁵⁸ See KAMMERER, 'Die private Revolte ist nie privat'.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

reads: 'Manche Leute ändern sich nie.' Nonetheless, they are not disillusioned by their betrayal at the hands of Hardenberg. As they return to their 'old' ways and head off to disable the television transmitters in the Mediterranean it is Jule who reiterates Jan's earlier conviction, stating that 'die besten Ideen überleben.'

Conclusion: 'Es macht Sinn, sich zu engagieren'

Hans Weingartner came of age at a time when the passing of the New German Cinema had led to the feeling 'dass Filme nichts bewirken können', as he later recalled.⁶⁰ Certainly, beginning with the pattern set by the filmmakers of the so-called New German Comedy of the 1990s, whose emulation of a predominantly Hollywood mode of production, Cooke suggests, 'marked a reaction to the avant-garde, overtly critical *auteurist* cinema of [...] artists connected with the New German Cinema'. Many scholars have taken a rather dim view of this more user-friendly method of filmmaking.⁶¹ One of the most vociferous voices on this subject has been Eric Rentschler, whose sceptical diagnosis of contemporary filmmaking practice in Germany, which he dubs the 'cinema of consensus', laments the apparent transformation of the cinema from a radical attempt at 'a moral institution or a political forum' into a populist 'site of mass diversion'.⁶²

But although *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* has been dismissed elsewhere, in terms congruous with Rentschler's taxonomy, as consensual 'Revolutionspop', it is by no means divested of a critical energy, even if, as we shall presently explore, this takes the form of a playful, pop-influenced aesthetic rather than the altogether more abrasive images which characterized the protest tradition of filmmaking during the late-1960s and 70s. Indeed, Weingartner had a clear aim in mind for his second major

⁶⁰ Cited in PEITZ and SCHULZ-OJALA, 'Radikalen brauchen Humor'.

⁶¹ COOKE, *Representing East Germany since Unification*, p. 106.

⁶² RENTSCHLER, 'From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus', p. 264.

feature: ‘Ich wollte, dass die Zuschauer aus dem Kino gehen und sagen: Es macht Sinn, sich zu engagieren, es kann auch durchaus Spaß machen, es kann mich politisch weiterbringen.’⁶³ With his film Weingartner wanted to mobilise the apathetic youth of his generation which he felt had slipped into a passive acceptance of the existing social order. As we have seen, this apparent state of willing conformity was epitomized by the thirst among this youth cohort for ‘pop’ which advocates ‘an aesthetic of consumption’ and “‘lifestyle issues” stripped of any political dimension’ to quote Andrew Plowman.⁶⁴ When the signs and insignia of the dissident past do return, they are privileged as consumer objects over the ideas they embodied. But although the director seeks to criticise this tendency, he nonetheless, and somewhat paradoxically, also employs the cultural language of ‘pop’ to do so. Specifically, Weingartner’s film might be said to ‘brand’ itself in terms acceptable to the very pop market it seeks to criticise, in a move analogous with a growing number of pop-influenced literary texts which, as Plowman also suggests, ‘posit themselves as commodities and point to the anticipated mode of their consumption.’⁶⁵

Despite the director’s contention that ‘Bei „Die fetten Jahre“ dachte ich, der Film kommt mit maximal acht Kopien ins Kino und läuft drei Wochen, der interessiert niemanden’, there is clear evidence to suggest that the film was marketed as a mass commodity aimed at a youth demographic: the theatrical release was accompanied by a soundtrack, although the majority of songs – which have a distinctly international flavour – do not actually feature in the film.⁶⁶ One anonymous but enthusiastic shopper at *amazon.de* had the following to say about the extended experience offered by the CD:

⁶³ GANSERA and GÖTTLER, ‘Die Liebe in Zeiten der Matrix’.

⁶⁴ PLOWMAN, “‘Was will ich denn als Westdeutscher erzählen?’”, p. 52.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

⁶⁶ Cited in Christiane PEITZ and Jan SCHULZ-OJALA. ‘Radikalen brauchen Humor’.

Nach endlosen (alternativen!?) Samplern, die so einfallsreich sind wie eine Fernsehsitzung vor MTV oder VIVA, ist es wohl ein Soundtrack (der Film ist ebenfalls genial), der durch Abwechslung und Coolness heraussticht. Ich bin froh, dass nicht nur deutsche Lieder draufgepackt wurden, sondern auch an internationale Interpreten gedacht wurde. Auch gefällt mir die Abwechslung im Bekanntheitsgrad der einzelnen Songs.⁶⁷

Clearly then, this customer's 'lifestyle' appetite for that which by today's youth standards is deemed 'alternative' – namely pop products which fall outside of the mainstream music channels and, therefore, correspond to the definition-elusive category of 'coolness' rather than any political basis – appears to have been satiated by the aesthetics of *Die fetten jahre sind vorbei* as a complete, totalizing pop-product.⁶⁸

As well as Jan, Peter and Jule's pop-influenced form of protest, there are further ways in which Weingartner appeals to the aesthetic enjoyed by the anonymous reviewer mentioned above to tell his story. The non-diegetic use of Jeff Buckley's 'cult' re-rendering of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* is used by Weingartner to propel his narrative forward after Peter's discovery of the burgeoning love between Jule and Jan threatens to explode the trio's solidarity. Buckley's life was tragically cut short when he drowned in 1997, aged only 30. Although the drowning was ruled to be accidental, rumours still persist that the troubled artist took his own life. As Gabrielle Klein notes, 'Pop als Lebensstil meint eine Art zu denken und zu fühlen, zu leben und auch zu sterben – und so ist nicht zufällig die Mystifizierung des frühen Todes ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der Popkultur, angefangen bei James Dean über Jim

⁶⁷ Anonymous customer review, 'Endlich ein geiler Sampler', posted 23rd December 2004. < http://www.amazon.de/Die-Fetten-Jahre-Sind-Vorbei/dp/B0006A86QE/ref=pd_bbs_sr_3?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1198342034&sr=8-3 > [accessed on 22nd July 2006].

⁶⁸ The anonymous reviewers pleasure that with the CD 'an internationale Interpreten gedacht wurde' is somewhat naïve, given that the easily localized narrative was almost guaranteed an international release by virtue of its nomination at Cannes.

Morrison, Jimi Hendrix und Janis Joplin bis zu Kurt Cobain.’⁶⁹ This is a list to which Buckley can certainly be added. The elegiac tone embodied by this icon of pop-myth, both in terms of his lyrics and his life story, is seized upon by Weingartner to colour his film.

But what then of Weingartner’s hopes for the mobilizing potential of his text? For the director the consumption of his text is paramount, and although his film might speak to a ‘consensual’ pop aesthetic, this generates the greatest possibility of reaching the greatest number of the desired demographic with its message. Speaking of the ‘surprise’ success of his film, the director even goes as far as to suggest ‘Jetzt denke ich: Es sind die coolen Leute, die da reingegangen sind. Es gibt doch noch genug coole Leute.’⁷⁰ Such a sentiment would seem to support the attitude of the consumer mentioned above. The importance, it would seem, lays in the attempt. Evoking Richard Linklater’s calling-card for the American ‘generation X’ film *Slacker* (1991),⁷¹ Weingartner motions that ‘every action is a positive action, even if it has a negative result.’⁷² The Austrian-born director wants simply to motivate and, where possible, inspire his otherwise apathetic peers, thus echoing the aims of his fictional protagonists, who hope to inspire imitators.

In a case of life imitating art, Weingartner’s wish was granted, leading to a very positive result for the filmmaker. Described by the director as ‘mein glücklichster Moment in diesem Jahr’, in May 2005 a group of masked protestors stormed the exclusive Hamburg restaurant Süllberg in a protest against Germany’s ostensible ‘Zweiklassengesellschaft’.⁷³ Armed with oversized cardboard knives and forks the protesters helped themselves to the expensive buffet and distributed flowers

⁶⁹ Gabrielle KLEIN, ‘Pop-Leben: Lebensstil als Inszenierungsstrategie’, p.19.

⁷⁰ Cited in PEITZ and SCHULZ-OJALA, ‘Radikalen brauchen Humor’.

⁷¹ Weingartner served as a production assistant on another of Linklater’s films, *Before Sunrise* (1995).

⁷² See GANSERA and GÖTTLER, ‘Die Liebe in Zeiten der Matrix’.

⁷³ Cited in PEITZ and SCHULZ-OJALA, ‘Radikalen brauchen Humor’.

to the diners, as well as flyers which attacked the working conditions at the restaurant and its manager, Karlheinz Hauser:

Diese Aktion richtet sich gegen die Arbeitsverhältnisse. Im Hause Hauser sind unbezahlte Überstunden für die zumeist nur aushilfsweise beschäftigten Arbeitskräfte die Regel. Da ein Betriebsrat verhindert wurde, müssen die Angestellten für Hausers neues Auto länger arbeiten. Sie alle können es sich nicht leisten, hier essen zu gehen.⁷⁴

If the political sentiment here seems familiar, then that is because the protesters were directly influenced by Weingartner's film – as well as distributing flyers they all wore t-shirts with the slogan 'Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei'. This might not amount to the director having restored the revolutionary energy of the youth, but, like Jan and Peter, it is a small step in the right direction.

⁷⁴ See Wiebke STREHLOW and Olaf WUNDER, 'Mundraub im Gourmet-Tempel', *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 2 May 2005.
<<http://archiv.mopo.de/rewrite/show.php?pfad=/archiv/2005/20050502/nachrichten/hamburg/panorama/hmp2005050118314003.html>> [accessed on 18 July 2006]

Conclusion

Es hat keinen Zweck, den falschen Leuten das Richtige erklären zu wollen. Das haben wir lange genug gemacht. Die Baader-Befreiungs-Aktion haben wir nicht den intellektuellen Schwätzern, den Hosenscheißern, den Allesbesser-Wissen zu erklären, sondern den potentiell revolutionären Teilen des Volkes. Das heißt, denen, die die Tat sofort begreifen können, weil sie selbst Gefangene sind. Die auf das Geschwätz der >>Linken<< nichts geben können, weil es ohne Folgen und Taten geblieben ist. Die es satt haben!

– RAF, ‘Die Rote Armee aufbauen’¹

With these opening lines from its first communiqué the Red Army Faction formally announced its inception to the West German public, setting in motion the fatal consequences of the first and defining era in its history which culminated in the bloodshed of the ‘German Autumn.’ Although many remained sympathetic to the culture of resistance which informed the terrorism of the RAF, the group’s extreme use of violence precluded the wide scale support that it was intended to generate, ensuring that the ‘revolution’ would not take place. But not only did the RAF’s actions fail to convince the masses of the political and moral bankruptcy of the system of government under which they purportedly suffered, the terrorists’ violent excess aided the federal government in cementing a view of the RAF as the true ‘falschen Leuten.’ The RAF was denounced in official discourse as either a band of bass criminals or the true heirs to the

¹ RAF, ‘Die Rote Armee aufbauen. Erklärung zur Befreiung Andreas Baaders vom 5. Juni 1970’, in Martin HOFFMAN (ed.), *Rote Armee Fraktion. Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der RAF* (Berlin: ID-Verlag, 1997), pp. 24-26 (24).

fascism which the terrorists claimed to have identified in the state. Thus Chapter 1 examined how the state successfully consolidated its discursive practices in the aftermath of the 'German Autumn.' Applying Jan Assmann's concept of memory transmission, I suggested that the state, chiefly aided by the *Nachrichtensperre*, sought to lock out undesirable communicative memories of terrorism from public discourse, arguably shunting the memory of the RAF into a premature phase of cultural formation which could be regulated to suit the perspective of the hegemony. Through this process, the state was able to close down the political resonance of the RAF's acts.

Although the filmmakers of the New German Cinema did not support the RAF's use of extreme violence as a means of protest, they were spurred into action by the state's politics of information, feeling that the media condemnation and overall criminalization of the RAF failed to deal with the underlying political crisis that the group had unleashed. In Chapter 2 we saw how, for the filmmakers of *Deutschland im Herbst*, the state's production of cultural memory was seen to have encouraged collective amnesia, both in terms of the echoes of the largely repressed Nazi past which the terrorists had sought to illuminate, and a new cycle of contemporary repression which threatened to consume the memory of urban terrorism. In their bid to hold on to memory, the filmmakers offered alternative images and memories of the period which, although more measured in tone than the RAF's unequivocal 'charge of fascism', explored the absences in Germany's historical imagination which might have provoked the turn to left-wing terror in the immediate postwar generation, and posed questions about the persistence of an authoritarian character in the state's handling of the crisis. In Chapter 3 we saw how von Trotta made this link explicit, linking the unmanageable trauma of the Nazi past as a

psychological trigger for contemporary violence in her film *Die bleierne Zeit*. Above all, these films sought to participate in a labour of mourning for the unresolved legacies of past horrors and present terror in the hope of breaking a cycle of violence which it was feared might otherwise carry on unabated.

Chapter 4 traced the memory of the RAF post-unification, showing how, despite their best efforts, the ‘fahrende D-Zug der Zeit’ which the filmmakers had tried to halt travelled on unperturbed.² Although the ‘new’ Federal Republic had made progress in coming to terms with the Nazi past, for post-Wall filmmakers the RAF remained an unresolved legacy in its own right. The twentieth anniversary of the ‘German Autumn’ in 1997 saw the RAF return as a media spectacle, a representational strategy which allowed the state to remind the collective of the dominant terms of remembrance. When not forgotten as such, the terrorism of the RAF was proffered by the media as having been resolved. However, once again it was the country’s filmmaker’s who sought to challenge this consensual, conclusive view of the recent past. In Chapter 5 we saw how Petzold’s *Die innere Sicherheit* suggested that the failure to deal with the terrorist legacy might allow it to impose itself on the narratives of subsequent generations. In the figure of Jeanne, Petzold takes a dim view of the outcome of the utopian potential of the child proposed by von Trotta. Echoing the way in which the unprocessed legacy of the RAF might be said to haunt the Berlin Republic from the periphery of the collective consciousness, Hans and Clara return to Germany as ghostly representatives of a past which refuses to go away and threatens to prevent their 89er daughter from finding a future unburdened by the past. Chapter 6 considered Veiel’s *Black Box BRD*, a film which tries to problematize the entrenched terms of cultural remembrance. By frustrating

² BRUSTELLIN ET AL., ‘*Deutschland im Herbst: Worin liegt die Parteilichkeit des Film?*’. p. 80.

the polarized *Täter/Opfer* binary, Veiel suggests that while the terrorism experienced by the 'old' Federal Republic had been decided upon, it had by no means been dealt with. In a bid to catalyze renewed engagement with this ostensibly closed chapter in the country's history, we saw how Veiel recovers a human dimension that was otherwise denied in the terrorist of the hegemonic imagination. But exceeding the political bias of *Deutschland im Herbst*, Veiel recognizes a need to transcend the ideological battle lines on both sides of the divide, thus also recovering the individual which lurked behind the 'character mask' of the terrorist imagination.

We also considered how the premature line which the state drew under the terrorism of the RAF also energized a 'new' myth. The strength of vilification afforded to the terrorists by the state saw the Berlin Republic's youngest generation seize on the RAF's *Täter* status as a positive gesture of defiance through which they can mark out their difference to the parent culture. But beyond this vague gesture of youth dissidence, the invocation of the RAF in modern pop culture saw the terrorists decontextualised and depoliticized; what the RAF did and wanted to achieve faded into the background while the aesthetic intensity of the group was packaged and sold as a commodity. In Chapter 7 we considered how the returning 68er Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* was dismissed by the critics for apparently exploiting the glamourizing potential of the RAF. However, while problematic, we saw how Schlöndorff was arguably engaged not in valorizing terrorist practices, but attempting to relocate the politically charged *Lebensgefühl* of his generation that terrorist violence brought to an end, and which the filmmaker feels is sorely missing in the post-unification climate of rampant consumerism. In this regard Chapter 8 considered how 89er Hans Weingartner's *Die fetten jahre sind*

vorbei might be read as having advanced Schlöndorff's diagnosis by offering a gesture of ideological recuperation that is rooted in a 68er sensibility but which rejects the use of terror as means of praxis. Weingartner seeks to energize his apolitical peers through the example of his 'Erziehungsberechtigten,' whose imaginative form of protest might point to a sense of fulfillment beyond life-long shopping. Although Weingartner's altogether more commercial aesthetic speaks the language of pop, his film is far from being bereft of critical impetus. Furthermore, in this regard we might see another way in which the film gestures to the legacy of '68 if we consider that for the student movement 'the enjoyment of pop culture, from rock music to Louis Malle's film *Viva Maria*', as von Dirke suggests, 'was not considered separate from political struggle.'³

Writing in 2000, Rentschler's lament for a turn to consensual and commercial filmmaking was shaped foremost by the aesthetically banal and politically inert domestic releases which dominated the 1990s. But the return to terrorism in film at the turn of the new millennium marks a new phase of critical engagement in post-unification German cinema. Far from affirming the status quo surrounding the present understanding of the terrorist past, above all these films do not seek to provide easy answers but pose questions which otherwise would not be asked. The aesthetic shape that these films take might, in many cases, not be as abrasive as the form which characterized the New German Cinema, but they nonetheless challenge the assumption that we are only dealing with a cinema of consensus, standing, as they do, at the vanguard of a new period in

³ VON DIRKE, '*All Power to the imagination!*', p. 33.

which an increasing number of filmmakers, as David Clarke suggests, 'seek to bridge the gap between popular cinema and intelligent filmmaking.'⁴

But what does the future hold for films dealing specifically with the legacy of left-wing terrorism? Certainly, the questions posed by the films considered in this text remain unanswered. The thirtieth anniversary of the 'German Autumn' was heralded by *Focus* as 'Das Erinnerungsjahr des Terrors' after a 'new' barrage of talk-show interviews and debates, television and editorial retrospectives and, as we have seen, refused calls for clemency characterized the second half of 2007.⁵ But as much as the Berlin Republic might have been invested in remembering *the* year of terror, but again this process was predicated on old rules. In many ways the occasion appeared to be a rerun of the twentieth anniversary in 1997 with the dramatic events of Mogadishu replayed to once again evoke the 'Wir-Gefühl von damals.' Former Chancellor Schmidt used the occasion to expiate his private sense of guilt for Schleyer's sacrifice to the greater good: 'Ich bin verstrickt in Schuld – Schuld gegenüber Schleyer und gegenüber Frau Schleyer,' and also to reiterate his view that the terrorists' 'Angst, der Faschismus stehe wieder bevor und die Große Koalition sei ein Wegbereiter, die war großer Quatsch.'⁶ Furthermore, while *Spiegel* was claiming the advent of yet another 'neue Phase deutscher Vergangenheitsbewältigung' with regard the terrorist past, ARD screened a television debate between the son of RAF target Siegfried Buback and ex-terrorist Peter-Jürgen Boock titled 'Das Opfer und der Täter', and marketed as a morbid spectacle, a television

⁴ David CLARKE, 'German cinema since Unification', in CLARKE (ed.) *German Cinema since Unification*, pp. 1-10 (5).

⁵ Jens BAUSZUS, 'Das Erinnerungsjahr des Terror'. *Focus Online*, 20 December 2007 <http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/raf/tid-8127/raf_aid_145511.html> [accessed on 22 December 2007]

⁶ Giovanni DI LORENZO, "'Ich bin in Schuld verstrickt'", *die Zeit*, 30 July 2007.

‘Drama besonderer Art.’⁷ For his own part, Boock, whom Reinhard Mohr suggested ‘noch sichtbar in seiner RAF-Biographie feststeckt’ reflected the inability to critically reflect his past which, as we saw in Chapter 6, is not an isolated tendency amongst the surviving terrorists.⁸

Thus it is perhaps without surprise that, in the same year, Andres Veiel suggested that the current RAF debate would appear to bring little to the table:

Die mediale Erinnerungswelle bekommt immer mehr Eventcharakter. Dass der Mythos RAF weiter aufrechterhalten wird, dafür gibt es mehrere Ursachen, auf Seiten des Staats, der RAF und der Öffentlichkeit. [...] Beide Seiten hatten ein Interesse, den Mythos zu nähren. Die Arbeit der Entzauberung müsste jetzt endlich geleistet werden. Aber man bleibt lieber dem alten Schlagabtausch verhaftet.⁹

Not content with the work started in *Black Box BRD* on demystifying the cultural terms of remembrance surrounding the terrorists from his own generation, Veiel is currently turning his attention to the Baader-Meinhof era of the RAF with a filmic adaptation of Gerd Koenen’s book *Vesper Ensslin Baader. Urszenen des deutschen Terrorismus* (2003), due for release in 2008. In the director’s words, the film ‘erzählt als dokumentarischer Spielfilm eine sichtbar bekannte Geschichte neu.’ Drawing on a lengthy pre-production schedule of intensive research (from interviews, to letters and diary entries) Veiel avers that through his film ‘die zu Ikonen erstarrten Protagonisten ein überraschend neues Gesicht [erhalten].’¹⁰

⁷ See Reinhard MOHR, ‘Gefangene der Vergangenheit’, *Spiegel Online*, 26 April 2007 <<http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,479521,00.html>> [accessed on 24 June 2007]

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ In Christiane PEITZ, ‘Deutscher Beton (Gespräch mit Andres Veiel)’, *Tagesspiegel online*, 10 May 2007 <<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/art772,433549>> [accessed on 16 May 2007]

¹⁰ Andres VEIEL, ‘Zwei Projekte’, *film-dienst*, 23 (2004), p. 21.

In addition, Stefan Aust is co-writing the screenplay for the filmic adaptation of his own *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex*, also due for release in 2008 and helmed by director Uli Edel. However, with domestic teen-idol Moritz Bleibtreu playing the lead role of Baader, the direction the film will take in relation to the glamourising potential of terror is, as yet, unclear. Also due for release at the beginning of 2008 is the television film *Mogadishu Welcome*, a fictionalized account of the Landshut air-jacking at the height of the ‘German Autumn’ which promises to recapture ‘eine der spektakulärsten Geiselbefreiungen der Geschichte’, according to Barbara Jänichen. With heart-throb potential this time deployed on the part of the RAF’s victims – Thomas Kretschmann who has enjoyed break-out success in Hollywood is to play the Landshut captain, Jürgen Schumann – it remains to be seen precisely what relationship the film will take to the events it depicts.

Whatever the case, there is still clearly more to come, and to be said on the RAF as a topic of interest to filmmakers. With this study I hope to have shown that filmmakers remain a crucial voice in attempting to remember the RAF in terms of a more nuanced debate which, although important, few others would seem to wish to engage beyond a closed network of cultural remembrance which continues to belie the unresolved nature of the legacy of the RAF. Furthermore, I would hope that my thesis opens the field for further inquiry into a hitherto under-explored research area.

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