

Interview with Le Monde Diplomatique

This interview originated from questions presented to the lawyers by Le Monde Diplomatique. The political parts of the questions were answered by the prisoners. While we are not aware of the interview ever being published by the liberal French newspaper, copies were distributed by the prisoners' supporters. The date normally given for this document is June 10, 1976.

A somewhat expanded version of the interview addressing supplementary questions exists. However, the only version of that text available to us was an extremely poorly translated and badly organized English-language version. Faced with this problem, we decided to base our translation on the German-language version available on a website maintained by former RAF member Ronald Augustin. The English-language translation of the longer version available to us indicates that little of substance was added to what is presented here. (M. & S.)

Q.: The alleged suicide of Ulrike Meinhof is seen overwhelmingly by the left and critical observers as an institutional murder, the culmination of 4 years of soul-destroying solitary confinement.

A: The concept of institutional murder is not precise enough. It is more accurate to say that, in a military conflict, imprisoned revolutionaries will be executed. We are certain that, as with Holger Meins and Siegfried Hausner, it was murder—a premeditated execution following the years of psychological warfare. We are trying to find out the details of how this murder was committed. It is clear that the state has done everything possible to hide the facts, while state security and the state security journalism organized by the BAW attempt to exploit the situation for propaganda purposes. Nothing indicates suicide, but there are many facts that suggest murder:

The prisoners were not allowed to see their dead comrade. Her corpse was rushed out of the prison as the first lawyer arrived to visit Gudrun

Ensslin. The corpse underwent an autopsy by order of the BAW, without the lawyers or relatives having an opportunity to see her, in spite of their demands to do so. Her sister was denied the right to bring in a pathologist of her choosing. The corpse was so mangled after the autopsy that the second pathologist could not deliver any precise findings—for example, a 25 cm long caesarean scar from the birth of her children could not be located.

Her brain and internal organs were removed.

Nevertheless, the effects of numerous injuries from blunt objects were visible on her legs.

And the injuries to the organs in her throat (a broken hyoid bone and the damage to the thyroid cartilage) virtually rule out “death by hanging.”

The request to have the cell inspected by her lawyer, her executor, or a relative was denied. The cell was “renovated,” totally repainted, two days after her death, even though the wing in which she died is not occupied. So far, neither the lawyers nor the relatives have received any answers from the authorities, besides the terse assertion that it was “suicide by hanging.”

In the press statements from the political judiciary, there are five contradictory versions regarding how the rope was secured. The one that ultimately became the official version and which was published was that she had rolled a hand towel into a 5 cm thick rope and fastened it tightly around her neck. Then she climbed onto a chair and threaded and fastened this 5 cm thick rope through the mesh of a screen, through which not even the small finger of a child would fit (for this an instrument would be needed, and none was found). Then she is supposed to have turned herself around and jumped.

Before this version was decided upon, the prison warden, who was one of the first in the cell, stated that there was no chair near the corpse, and the prison doctor who examined her first declared that her feet were 20 cm from the floor.

In the statements from the political judiciary, one finds only contradictions. Nonetheless, there has been no inspection of the files, and they have adamantly refused to share information with the relatives, the lawyers or neutral authorities. Regarding the possibility of an international committee of inquiry, which has been demanded throughout Europe, the Ministry of Justice declared, “There is neither the grounds nor the scope for any international body.”

Q: Against which background is deliberate murder to be seen?

A: The story behind this murder is documented in the files. On the government's behalf, and using all available political and moral means, the Attorney General has tried for six years to "exterminate" the RAF prisoners, especially Ulrike and Andreas, and to "wipe out" the example they set in resisting the new fascism's institutional strategy, as formulated by Schmidt in government statements and programs.

For as long as the RAF has existed, the Attorney General's plan for Ulrike was to use her to personalize and pathologize revolutionary politics. Therefore, after her arrest, she was to be broken in the dead wing and psychiatrically restructured before her trial. After her arrest, she was imprisoned, by order of the BAW, from June 16, 1972, until February 9, 1973—that is 237 days—in a dead wing, which means total acoustic isolation. That is the prison in which state security houses prisoners during the phase of interrogation and "preparation for trial." It is an extreme form of torture. No human can endure a lengthy period in an acoustic and social vacuum. One's sense of time and one's physical equilibrium are destroyed. One aspect of white torture is that the prisoner's agony is magnified, not reduced, as the torture continues. The ultimate result is irreversible brainwashing, which, to begin with, dissolves the control the tortured person has over what he says, over his speech; he babbles.

And his ability to grasp even a single thought is destroyed. What is left is a body, which on the outside shows hardly any sign of injury.

The program was at all times under the control of the BAW and the state security psychiatrist, Götte. But Ulrike endured the 237 days, because she fought. All of us could see that her mind and her will remained unbroken.

Another RAF prisoner, Astrid,¹ who had previously spent three months in the dead wing, never recovered—not even after her release three years ago. Even today she is seriously ill.

The BAW assumed that Ulrike would be broken by the dead wing. On January 4, 1973, Buback—the Attorney General—wrote that Ulrike was to be committed "to a public sanitarium—or a nursing home—so that a report on her mental health could be prepared." The public, which the defense lawyers were able to mobilize, just barely managed to prevent this. But the BAW tenaciously pursued their goal of having

¹ Astrid Proll, a founding member of the RAF.

Ulrike declared mentally ill. On April 18, 1973, Buback directed the justice system psychiatrist Witter to deliver an opinion on Ulrike's sanity. In his letter, he said:

On the basis of Frau Meinhof's conduct to date, it seems doubtful she would cooperate regarding particular examinations or consent to surgical treatment. If professional opinion suggests that certain interventions are necessary, I would ask you to report to me with detailed information on the examination considered necessary, so that, under §81 of the Criminal Code, the pertinent court order can be obtained. Should it be necessary to involve a neurologist, I would suggest making arrangements to obtain the cooperation of the Director of the University Neurological Clinic in Homburg, Professor Dr. Loew.

At this point the attempt to gain control of Ulrike's brain became obvious. Loew is one of the most notorious neurosurgeons in Germany. He experiments with "adaptive surgery" on prisoners.

Witter, in his answer, initially requested an x-ray of the skull and a scintigraphy.² But in the same letter, he explains to the BAW that the examination could be carried out under anesthesia, should Ulrike, to quote, "refuse to cooperate."

The objective of this intervention is made clear in an August 28, 1973, letter to the Attorney General. It says, "Above all, proof of a brain tumor could be an important indication of the need for a therapeutic operation."

"Important indication" here means that permission for cretinization is not required from either the prisoner or the prisoner's relatives. The psychiatrist decides "after consideration" about whether to proceed with stereotactical³ mutilation. The BAW then files a petition with the investigating judge and after receiving the decision orders the intervention, with the proviso that "These measures can be undertaken against the will of the accused, and if necessary by use of direct force and under anesthesia."

2 According to the MedicineNet.com, scintigraphy is "A diagnostic test in which a two-dimensional picture of a body radiation source is obtained through the use of radioisotopes."

3 According to the *American Medical Heritage Dictionary*, stereotactical pertains to stereotaxis, which is "A surgical technique that uses medical imaging to precisely locate in three dimensions an anatomical site to which a surgical instrument or a beam of radiation is directed."

The whole thing eventually failed as a result of massive international protest, including that of many doctors.

Striving for an orderly retreat, the BAW declared that they had only at this point become aware of Ulrike's medical history, which had been published in the *Zentralblatt für Neurochirurgie* in 1968 and in *Stern* in 1972. That is a stupid lie, as, according to the files, Ulrike was identified by state security after her arrest in '72 by referring to the x-rays in her medical files.

After that, Ulrike was placed in the dead wing on two more occasions—alone from December 21, 1973, until January 3, 1974, and together with Gudrun from February 5, 1974, until April 28, 1974.

But the incarceration of the two prisoners in the dead wing met with such strong international protests that the SPD government had to drop their plan to pathologize Ulrike in order to depict fundamental opposition to the Federal Republic as constituting an illness. The project, a "quiet and determined assertion of normality," was an attempt to present, through torture and neurosurgery, a destroyed mind at a political show trial. It failed. That is the back story.

All the facts, which are gradually becoming known, suggest that on the night of May 8-9, 1976, Ulrike was murdered by state security, because the years of torture had failed to destroy her political identity, her revolutionary consciousness, and her will to fight.

The staging of the suicide follows the exact psychological warfare line that state security has followed since 1970. Physical liquidation and the political extermination of the RAF were the objectives of the massive hate and counterinsurgency campaign. Two months ago, Buback, the Attorney General, held that the second package of special legislation that had been rushed through was no longer needed for this trial, because, "We do not need any legal provisions. State security is given life by those who are committed to it. People like Herold and myself, we always find a way. If there are statutory provisions that must from time to time be stretched, they will for the most part be ineffective."

While Herold, the President of the BKA, said at a meeting regarding the problem of these prisoners, "Actions against the RAF must primarily be developed in such a way as to undermine the positions held by sympathizers."

As an example, four hours after her death, the BAW disseminated rumors through the press regarding the motive: "tensions within the group," "far-reaching differences," etc., and the BAW's statement was nothing new. It is a word for word repetition of a formulation published

in 1971, five years ago, as part of a state security disorientation campaign. Then it was: Ulrike Meinhof has created “tensions” and “far-reaching differences” within the RAF.

But Ulrike’s last letters and the experiences of everyone who knows the group—and the experiences of all the lawyers who have seen the group over the past twelve months—prove that the relationships within the group were intense, loving, disciplined, and mutually open.

Everyone could see this.

Five years ago, in 1971, the state was unable to get at Ulrike. She was free, because she was underground. So as part of the psychological warfare campaign, state security claimed she was dead.¹ Now she was defenseless and imprisoned, so she was killed, because she continued to struggle in prison and at the trial.

One must understand at what point in time this murder was staged: four days earlier, the prisoners had filed evidentiary petitions, for which Ulrike had done the essential work.

These petitions addressed:

1) the fact that, in violation of international law, since its foundation the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany has been a strategic base for the aggressive, expansionist policies of the U.S.A. against third states, against the constitutional governments of third states, and against the anticolonial, national, and anti-imperialist liberation movements in the Third World, in the course of which, amongst other things, all relevant overt and covert military and secret service operations against the Warsaw Pact states and against legitimate parliamentary changes of government in the West European states, against anti-imperialist liberation movements in the Middle East, in Africa, and in South-East Asia, were planned, organized, orchestrated, supported, and overseen by U.S. intelligence services based on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany, specifically

¹ In early 1972, the BKA lost all trace of Meinhof (according to Stefan Aust, she was in Italy at the time). Rumours began to be spread, *Bild* publishing an article under the headline, “Has Ulrike Meinhof Committed Suicide?” and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* quoting unnamed government sources to the effect that she had been dead for months, either from a tumour or from suicide. See: Aust, 200.

a) that the IG Farben building in Frankfurt am Main functioned as the headquarters of several U.S. secret service organizations throughout the entire duration of the illegal aggression of the U.S.A. in Indochina;

b) that these U.S. agencies in the IG Farben building in Frankfurt am Main carried out strategic military planning, management, coordination, and control functions for both the operations and logistics of the U.S. military forces in Indochina and secret operations of U.S. intelligence agencies in Indochina;

2) that the structuring of the Federal Republic of Germany as a state after 1945 was carried out and developed by the U.S.A. as part of their expansionist strategy directed towards world power—particularly

that after the Second World War, the CIA, founded as an illegal arm of American foreign policy, directly controlled all relevant political, economic, and cultural institutions in the Federal Republic during the Cold War, through civilian front organizations, or through the businesses, unions, cultural organizations, and student organizations that they controlled, and later through the financing of political parties and trade unions, as well as by educating, financing, and sponsoring politicians and officials;

3) that through overt and covert, direct and indirect pressure, in the form of illegal interference in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic, and through the complete economic, military, and political hegemony of the U.S.A. over the Federal Republic, the Kiesinger/Brandt and Brandt/Scheel governments were involved in the overt and covert, aggressive, genocidal strategy against the Third World liberation movements, particularly in Indochina,

a) in that they supported the aggression politically, economically, and through propaganda, and allowed the U.S. Army to use military bases on the Federal Republic's territory;

b) in that they, as a sub-center of U.S. imperialism, developed a policy of illegal interference in the internal affairs of the Third World, particularly in regards to Indochina and the European periphery. This was done using their own intelligence services and through the export of police and military, weapons, training, technology, and logistics, through the financing of political parties, politicians, etc., as well as through economic pressure;

4) *that the Federal Republic of Germany*

a) on the basis of its origins as a product of the dictatorship of the Allied military powers led by the U.S.A.,

b) on the basis of conditions and requirements assuring the rights of the occupying powers under the leadership of the U.S.A., control was handed over to the German authorities,

c) on the basis of the provisions of the German Treaty of 1956 and later modifications of the Treaty,

particularly

the CIA-controlled dependence of the Federal Republic on the U.S.A., without it being a colony under international law, but with no declared national sovereignty in relationship to the U.S.A.

That was an extract.

One line in the petitions, for example, dealt with how social democracy and the trade unions, with the help of CIA-bought politicians like Willy Brandt and Rosenberg,¹ used career “advancement” and “positions” in the party and the trade union leadership, etc. to win support for the aggression and the consolidation of U.S. imperialism in Europe and in the Third World. This was established through extremely well documented investigations by comrades and friends, using witnesses who were directly involved.

The BAW coordinates matters between the domestic and foreign intelligence services—that is to say, between the CIA, BND, *Verfassungsschutz*, Military Counter-Intelligence Service, etc.—and is also the point of intersection between the propaganda and ideological functions of the political judiciary. With these petitions, the BAW was confronted with the problem that the crude theatrics with which they had hoped to depoliticize the trial—four years of torture, hate campaigns, psychological warfare, special legislation, a special court, the liquidation of the defense, etc.—were all crumbling in full public view. And at exactly this point, Ulrike would give up? It is absurd: the prisoners knew that the confrontation would come to a head here, and Ulrike was determined to fight to establish the facts during the trial, as were we all. Her letters and manuscripts, her speeches, and her work for the trial, for example, are proof of this right up until the very last day.

¹ Ludwig Rosenberg was, at this time, the Chairman of the *Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbund* (DGB—German Union Association).

She was murdered once it became clear to the BAW that the fascist example of the victory of the political judiciary and the Federal Republic over the guerilla—the show trial in Stammheim—might collapse despite all the repression.

Stammheim was meant to demonstrate the hopelessness of any and all resistance within the Federal Republic.

In this regard, for four years, “all possible means” were used—as had been expressly sanctioned by Schmidt and the Federal Constitutional Court. One can now say that they were unsuccessful.

What the struggle of the Stammheim prisoners established and communicated is the necessity, the possibility, and the logic of politics based on revolutionary action in the Federal Republic.

Q: The accused have fought with their last remaining means, the hunger strike, against the prison conditions. Has this achieved a change in the conditions of solitary confinement? Does the court take the state of health of the accused into account?

A: No.

At the time the prisoners broke off their hunger strike, after five months, it had become clear that the legal left could not manage a second mass mobilization like the one that followed the murder of Holger Meins. Furthermore, it had become clear that the BAW and Buback were determined to use the hunger strike to kill even more prisoners from the RAF, accompanying this with a bombastic display of medical window dressing. At this point, the RAF on the outside issued a statement ordering the prisoners to end the strike, even though their demand, the end of solitary confinement, had not been achieved. The statement said:

We are saying that the prisoners' strike has done everything it could to mediate, mobilize, and organize anti-imperialist politics here. Its escalation would not contribute anything qualitative to the struggle.

The state has calculated that it will be able to create propaganda from the execution of guerilla prisoners—who struggle, always struggle, in spite of everything struggle—that would make resistance seem hopeless. Allowing you to continue in this situation would amount to sacrificing you.

*We are taking this weapon away from you, because the prisoners' struggle—given the existing balance of power—is now something that we must settle with our weapons.*¹

This was a realistic appraisal of the balance of power.

The court had arrived at the conclusion that the prisoners, weakened by years of isolation, were only capable of attending the trial for two or three hours a day, which effectively excluded them from the trial. Disagreeing with the court-appointed doctors (no expert for the defense was accepted), whose involvement the defense finally succeeded in obtaining after months of fighting, the court maintained that the prisoners' inability to appear was a result of the hunger strike, and as such was deliberate and self-inflicted.²

In their expert opinion, the doctors clearly state that the prisoners' miserable state of health is caused by their prison conditions. Eight other expert opinions from public health agency doctors, etc. in RAF trials reached an identical conclusion: years of solitary confinement equals extermination.

The Federal Supreme Court has used disinformation to stretch the definition of "self-inflicted". Unlike the court, they do not claim that the inability to appear is due to the hunger strike—extracts from the expert opinions, which refute this claim, have been published since then. Instead, the Federal Supreme Court claims that the prisoners have, through their behavior in custody, forced the authorities to impose these prison conditions. The Federal Supreme Court eventually adopted this position and declared torture constitutional. In fact the custodial judge has already asked the prison warden to make sure that such prisoners are held in isolation. The Federal Supreme Court and the Federal Supreme Court judge who arrived at this decision know what they are doing. The judge consciously supported the objectives of the police and the Bonn Security Group's "Terrorism" Section—they and the BAW dictate prison conditions. Political justice in the Federal Republic is a function of the counterinsurgency campaign.

The rulings clearly state that the prison conditions can and will be changed if the prisoners renounce their politics, provide evidence, and place themselves at the disposal of the psychological warfare campaign

1 Letter from the RAF to the RAF prisoners, cf 338

2 According to §§231-231b, passed in June 1975, trials could proceed in the absence of defendants if this was due to self-inflicted health concerns.

against the urban guerilla. As regards such rulings, torture is clearly defined in international conventions as those means employed to destroy the prisoner with the objective of extorting statements that can be used in propaganda. It is in just this way that the West German justice system has legalized extermination imprisonment, so as to use the prisoners' state of health against the political prisoners.

Q: Has a political defense of the RAF been possible at any time during the Stuttgart-Stammheim proceedings? Are the accused free to explain their political motives and objectives at this trial?

A: So far, the prisoners have seldom been able to utter a sentence without being interrupted by Prinzing, or else the BAW intervenes. Bobby Seale was at least publicly gagged.¹ Here the court just switches off the prisoners' microphones, and if the prisoners still continue to speak, it bars them from the proceedings for at least four weeks. This method of interruption is effective. If one's thought process is interrupted ten times, then it is derailed. The spectators get the impression of mental redundancy. The trial's political significance is blocked. Every minute of the proceedings is simply psychological warfare.

There was an attempt to present a political defense, that is to say, to reconstruct the defense after the lawyers who had prepared it were barred shortly before the trial began. The court reacted by barring six more lawyers. Using challenges, denials, and, above all, court-appointed public defenders, the BAW has established Disciplinary Committees,² with the aim of applying the *Berufsverbot*. And it works. The Bar Association's Disciplinary Committee has a new staff made up of lawyers who specifically represent the interests of the BAW.

The Chairman of the Law Society admitted this openly during a radio interview a few months ago. Now the circle of special legislation will be closed. In June, the SPD presented parliament with a new "package" of special legislation that would perfect the existing ones. Now a prosecution motion will be sufficient to begin Disciplinary Committee proceedings against a lawyer so as to disbar him and initiate *Berufsverbot* proceedings against him, etc.

1 A founding member of the Black Panther Party, Seale was tied to a chair and gagged during the Chicago 8 trial, at which he and seven white codefendants (none of whom were tied or gagged in spite of disruptive behaviour) were charged in connection with violent protests during the Chicago 1968 Democratic Convention.

2 Literally, "Courts of Honor," or *Ehrengericht* in German.

The law will also be applied to trials that are already underway—in effect retroactively.

It is the second wave of special legislation, all for a single trial. As the trial was underway, Ströbele and Croissant were arrested and all of the defense material on which they were working was seized, and this after the BAW had already confiscated all of the prisoners' defense materials in three cell raids.

A detail worth adding is that the office of Andreas Baader's last remaining lawyer, Haag, who avoided arrest, was searched by Zeis, one of the federal prosecutors from Stammheim. This means that the BAW—by having the same federal prosecutor carry out both the persecution of the lawyers and the prosecution of the prisoners—does not even feel the need to hide why it is criminalizing the lawyers. That is the whole problem in the Federal Republic. Fascism is open, but there is no consciousness of it, and hardly any resistance.

Q: In a petition for a stay of proceedings, one of the defense lawyers described the trial as a military-political conflict rather than a legal one. What measures did the ruling class use to ensure that this conflict would be carried out with unequal weapons?

A: Special legislation, a judge illegally pushed into the head position, a 16 million DM³ bunker built just for this trial on the outskirts of town far away from any public transportation, the confiscation of 90% of the files by the BAW and the BKA, witnesses coached by the police and presenting testimony that has been structured for propaganda purposes, the persecution of lawyers, which of course handicaps the remaining lawyers at the trial.

Lawyers depend on a minimum of constitutional consistency. If, as in these proceedings, it is totally absent due to blatant repressive measures, then the lawyers are helpless. Special legislation for these big trials has reduced the number of defense counsel for each prisoner to three, and the successive banning of lawyers and the ban on the collective defense of the accused precludes any division of labor between the lawyers.

The despotic, secret administrative exclusions, which are effected with random, arbitrarily constructed accusations, including the *Berufsverbot* executed by the Bar Association—and one must say it—resemble the state security orgies of 1933. The arrests; the terrorism against the

³ Roughly \$6.25 million at the time.

lawyers' offices, with the confiscation of all of their files, including files from other proceedings, which a political lawyer depends on to make a living; the terrorism through open surveillance; the open intimidation of former clients, who are sought out, questioned, and pressured by the BKA squads; the loss of mandates; the criminal charges; the convictions based on defense arguments presented in court, etc., etc.—all of this leaves the lawyers helpless. The lawyers were confronted with false documents fabricated by the BAW, documents which were published with false quotes in the propaganda magazines of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, and which were distributed to schools, etc. in their millions; they are encircled by the police and by propaganda.

The prisoners say that in the legal vacuum of these proceedings, the lawyers are like chickens with their heads cut off. They are no match for the pragmatism, military in its precision, which extends over the whole repressive legal structure, from the government to the lawless terror of state security—just as was the case in 1933.

Either one sides with the prisoners' politics, the anti-imperialist struggle—because the persecution of the lawyers is also part of the struggle to eliminate these politics—or one succumbs to the repression. Some become opportunists, submitting themselves to the directives and threats that are present in each of these trials, where they function to prevent attempts to clarify the facts and organize solidarity. Others pull back, take flight, or fall silent, sometimes going so far as to no longer present the line that was developed by the defense team long ago.

Jan's lawyer, in a state of psychological distress, resigned from his mandate in the current Stammheim trial at the very moment when the key defense motion was to be presented—the basis for resistance in human rights law and for the application of prison conditions as mandated for prisoners of war in the Geneva Convention.¹ He had worked on it for three years. The evidentiary motion had as its theme the opposition to the Vietnam War between 67 and 72 and the political conclusions the RAF had arrived at as a result.

This means that the threat of the Disciplinary Committee, that is to say, the threat of the *Berufsverbot*, has caused these lawyers to abandon their professional principles and duties, it has prevented them from struggling to assure the minimum level of human rights for their clients, all in order to avoid risking their own position within the legal profession. The heightened repression has brought them back in line;

1 For more on this defense motion, see pages 455-56.

they accept the dismantling of the defendants' rights. It's grotesque. As political lawyers, they are, therefore, completely corrupt.

Besides the barriers with which the BAW has institutionally—through parliament, the courts, the board of the Bar Association, the LAWs, the law schools, etc.—made it difficult to accept a mandate in these proceedings, it has become almost impossible to find lawyers who are prepared to come to Stammheim. Fear reigns.

The confiscation of 90% of the files—over 1,000 file folders—is part of this mix of terror and fear. The suppression of the evidentiary files was necessary in order to be able to actually charge the prisoners. It is part of determining the outcome. Besides, the selective use of files is necessary for the BAW's ringleader construct. But, above all, the publication of the files would shed light on the manhunt that occurred between 1970 and 1972, the extent of the police investigation, and the size of the police apparatus, of which one is aware—the government continually crows about it—but which one cannot visualize.

“One thinks away from it,” filmmaker Kluge² recently said, and rightly so. The Bonn Security Group, with the *Verfassungsschutz*, the BND, the Military Counter-Intelligence Service, and the CIA, investigated the entire West German left, which, as a result, is now fully identified and within the grasp of state security. They have monitored telephones all the way to the top of the ministerial bureaucracy,³ spied on people, and sown suspicion. Trade unions, party youth sections, writers, journalists, and ministers were spied on. Were the files to become public, people would see how much control the police have over society and the state, the degree of mistrust and insecurity, the massive lack of legitimacy. Seeing this, they would see how fragile the consensus is within the state, this state that lacks national identity and legitimacy, this state inflamed by its chauvinism and its dependency on the U.S.A. It would be public incitement to resistance.

Q: The mass media in the FRG more or less ignores the trial. Before the trial began, there were a series of press campaigns against the RAF, the defense attorneys, and sympathizers. Is this the result of psychological warfare?

2 Alexander Kluge of *Gruppe 47* was a lawyer, filmmaker, television producer, screenplay writer, and author, best known for pioneering the New German Film style of the sixties and seventies.

3 Earlier in 1976, Klaus Traube, one the highest placed men in the nuclear industry, had had his home and office bugged by the BND. See Aust, 387-388.

A: The total synchronization of the mass media is a prerequisite for this police trial. Buback prepared a judicial press conference for the BAW in Karlsruhe; institutional press conferences are normally only held by the federal government and *Länder* bodies. They are an instrument for what is called “offensive information,” which is another expression of information policy making use of police tactics. At the same time, Buback also has a network of state security journalists at his disposal in the media, in the corporate editorial boards, and in the public institutions, who ensure that the trial is not simply ignored. The reports that appear are all similarly structured. Never a word of what the prisoners say. The defense line is falsified, with the result that witnesses’ testimony is twisted around to mean the opposite of what was said.

For example, the fact that the witness Hoff is completely discredited doesn’t appear in the newspapers. Hoff’s appearance had been trumpeted by the BAW in a press campaign that lasted months, his testimony was described as crucial to establishing the facts. What was published was that he, speaking for the government, denied the testimony of another witness who unmasked him. Hoff was a militant from the Frankfurt scene who was involved in the SDS at the time of the student movement between 67 and 71, and who had worked for the Algerian liberation movement in the early 60s. In prison he was bribed with promises and turned. Now he stammers exactly what state security has trained him to say, none of which confirms what the BAW has been claiming through press headlines for the past six months. The joke was that he really couldn’t incriminate Andreas. But on that day when he admitted in Stammheim that he could not even identify Andreas, all the German press printed that he had identified him.

There are also a couple of dozen other examples from significant points during the trials. For example, it was reported in the media that the prisoners had taken responsibility for the attack on the Springer Building. In fact, they had, in their explanation about the attacks against the U.S. Headquarters in Frankfurt and Heidelberg, expressly stated that they didn’t know about the attack on the Springer Building and did not approve of it conceptually.¹ But these are only details. What

¹ The explanation referred to here is not the communiqué which accompanied the Springer action and which is reprinted in this volume, but rather a court statement Gudrun Ensslin presented during in the Stammheim trial. Those who believe Meinhof committed suicide often point to this court statement as a motivating factor, as they claim Meinhof had been involved in organizing the Springer action and that Ensslin was rebuking her. These claims were vehemently denied by the

one had with Hoff was a programmed, brainwashed police recording, not a high point, but a pile of shit.

One must understand what happened. Hoff had so thoroughly memorized the testimony that had been formulated by the investigating judge that every time the word “pause” appeared in the transcript, because his dinner came or whatever, he came to a standstill. On the other hand, he could not repeat a single sentence from the transcript. He did not understand the content of his testimony. One could read along and see how he got stuck in a passage and was only able to get past the pauses with his lawyer’s help, and at other times had to be stopped. A macabre spectacle. Prinzing treated him obsequiously and assiduously. He was accompanied 24 hours a day by a “psychological caretaker” from the BKA, and during the breaks in the trial he went over his lines with his BKA interrogators. On the other hand, the BAW immediately threatened witnesses who disputed Hoff’s story with the complete disruption of their lives: *Berufsverbot* and the withdrawal of their passports. The trial is a government operation, and so the coverage is seamless propaganda, completely structured by the government.

A comparison to the Third Reich’s *Reichsschrifttumkammer*² or the *Volksgerichtshof*³ reporting is accurate. The only difference is that the forms of manipulation have now been perfected; the instruments of psychological warfare are more difficult to see through than the fascist propaganda of that time.

Q: What attitude do the democratic and anticapitalist forces in the FRG have towards the RAF trial?

A: The left is afraid. The small, subversively-inclined groups push away the trial. They know it’s their trial, that in the end it’s the Vietnam opposition of the 60s which is to be liquidated. They know that state security’s psychological war against the RAF, in which the trials play a role and Stammheim is the key, is directed against all opposition, and, as such, against them as well. And the terror is effective. They agonize. They are angry, but stick their heads in the sand.

prisoners themselves; see Brigitte Mohnhaupt’s Testimony at the Stammheim Trial, July 22, 1976, cf 357-8.

2 *Reichsschrifttumkammer* (Reich Writers Chamber): a legal body responsible for classifying literature during the Third Reich.

3 *Volksgerichtshof* (People’s Court): the Nazi puppet court that hounded opponents, usually sentencing them to death on the basis of coerced and falsified testimony.

It's gone so far that *Informationsdienst*, which published, in the Federal Republic, the names of a few CIA agents from the U.S. embassy in Bonn, does not dare to publish prisoners' texts that have already been read in public. Of the Maoist groups, the KBW has at least criticized the trial from a legal point of view. They don't understand that the violations of the law, the legalization of isolation torture by the Federal Supreme Court and the Federal Constitutional Court are signs of war and fascism. With their stupid dogmatism, they misrepresent the prisoners' politics and defend democratic rights, which were never real in the Federal Republic, and which are embedded in the Constitution only as a vehicle for anticommunism. But that doesn't work for the state apologists who define themselves according to Lenin's organizational model or according to the pre-party formation model.

The KPD and the KPD/ML, as Maoists, are entirely submissive to Peking. They openly support the U.S. military strategy; the strengthening of NATO and the *Bundeswehr* so as to entrench the hegemony of West German imperialism in Western Europe. Defense of the Fatherland. The RAF thinks otherwise: they attacked the U.S. presence in the Federal Republic and the politics of the Brandt/Scheel and Schmidt/Genscher governments, which served the interests of U.S. capital in the Federal Republic, that strategic sub-center of U.S. imperialism. One cannot regret the fact that these sects ignore the trial, given that the reactionary content of their political practice makes their anti-imperialist rhetoric purely abstract.

For as long as it has existed, the DKP has been licking the boots of social democracy. They are doubtless the most corrupt communist party, at least in Western Europe. As far as I know, one thing that has contributed to this—and this is why, for example, Ulrike, who had previously fulfilled important functions for the illegal KPD, broke with them—is the way in which this party began to adjust its political line to accommodate the SPD so as to facilitate its legalization.

The problem is the overall depoliticization of the left. In fact, at no time during the campaign against the *Berufsverbot* was the question of the state addressed; what sort of state it is and whose state it is that the left is publicly sanitizing. The left, claiming a strategic perspective, began the march through the institutions in 68—although the ambivalence as to whether “a revolutionary career perspective” was not simply another term for “an official's salary” was already apparent at the time. The hue and cry about the *Berufsverbot* disguised their objective.

State security must preserve the entire civil service so as to—and this is the case in the trials—shift the whole institution to the right. The extremely aggressive way in which they pursue this objective, without running up against any resistance, is a function of the postfascist state in the Federal Republic. Part of this is the structure of the state and its unbroken continuity with the Third Reich, which includes the political hygiene practiced through the eradication of opposition between 33 and 45, and after 45 the gagging, paralyzing, and integrating of the groups emerging from illegality, groups which had been corrupted in exile and which were eventually brought under the control of the U.S. occupying power, the CIA, etc. during the Cold War.

The qualitative leaps which take place as fascism develops have not been grasped. Not so long ago even Amnesty International, an active anti-communist organization, or anti-Soviet in any event, that acts primarily in a way that is supportive of the FRG, complained that people no longer dare to sign petitions opposing torture in Latin America and South East Asia out of fear of being registered with the *Verfassungsschutz*. And they will be registered. The fear is well founded.

The full extent of the problem is apparent in the process of adopting a new *Verfassungsschutz* law in Lower Saxony. Almost all other *Länder* already have such a law, in accord with the principles issued centrally by the Interior Ministers Conference. The law decrees that all employees and officials of the civil service and radio and TV corporations have a duty to provide information to the *Verfassungsschutz*. At the same time, the BKA, equipped with the largest database in the world, is screening the entire left. What is taking place is, in practice, the almost complete control and registration of the political scene in the Federal Republic, which is a more far-reaching process than the physical internment that has taken place in Chile. The political climate resembles that which follows a fascist putsch. Accordingly, panic rules.

The fact that the guerilla and the prisoners from the RAF do not have this problem of fear is the result of having a political coherence that has its political history, but not its political center, in the Federal Republic. Its identity is international.

If the fascist drift is to be understood at all in the Federal Republic, then it will be understood through the guerilla struggle. The guerilla struggle tempers the demoralization of the left, allowing one to develop a self-critical relationship with one's own corruption; and it does that through Stammheim, through the prisoners' struggle, and through resis-

tance. However, within this state, the fact that the enormous repression in the prisons has not broken the prisoners has very little impact on the overall depoliticization of this left.

Q: What is the significance of the RAF trials in the current political and economic situation in the FRG?

A: The prisoners say the trials are irrelevant. State security is in total control of the terrain. The trials are thoroughly preprogrammed. One must fight because one must always fight, but the machine demonstrates that nothing can be achieved at this level. But the procedural measures, including the dressing up of military methods and goals as the rituals of normal criminal proceedings, are an organic expression of the break in U.S. capital's strategy since its defeat in Vietnam. The intensity of the whole thing indicates the defensive position of U.S. capital and the resistance to its strategy since Vietnam.

Within the FRG, the trials are meant to accustom the population to the State of Emergency, so that it is accepted as normal and those who resist can be destroyed. That is the lesson state security hopes to impart with these trials. And at home, it works. Abroad, it doesn't. Abroad, the exceptional character of repression in the FRG has been recognized, and the government's domestic policies, which in the FRG are always a function of U.S. foreign policy—that has been the strategic function of the FRG for American capital since 45, or at least since its founding in 1949—are recognized as dysfunctional.

This is exactly what social democracy is meant to hide: the fact that today, serving the interests of international U.S. capital, West German imperialism is no different than the old fascism—this time without a reactionary mass mobilization, but rather as an institutional state strategy (over which U.S. capital has total control). This only became clear in the state's reaction to the politics of the RAF.

The prisoners say the preventive counterrevolution only makes sense when its relationship to the global system is considered: the repression within the state is a function of the strategic role the FRG plays for American capital. Just as its strategic operations in Europe and in the Common Market are a function of U.S. capital's defensive action in the Third World, as are those in the Mediterranean states of Europe and North Africa which are meant to secure military control of Middle Eastern oil—by assuring the existence of counterrevolutionary forces, which they control in these states. In this global system, the

legal attacks on anti-imperialist politics in the FRG have political relevance, because they completely unmask social democracy. The RAF was clear that this was how it would unfold and that the SPD was the transmission belt of the new fascism. The RAF analyzed and anticipated this development long before it became obvious to world opinion in Portugal.¹

Brandt wrote in a letter to Palme:² “Social democratic politics anticipate catastrophe so as to prevent it.”

The RAF says that the strategic project of U.S. imperialism that is carried through by German social democracy and the Socialist International³ represents the smooth unfolding of the fascist drift within civilian state structures. This is the “unique nature” of their relationship. Here in a social democratic police state, that with socialist rhetoric and through the usurping of the old antifascism is celebrated as *Modell Deutschland*, this policy was forced to take an extremely developed form. That this was due to a social revolutionary guerilla representing positions held by a tiny minority has nothing to do with provocation. The armed struggle here has a tactical quality—it is a factor which clarifies reality and represents the only option for proletarian resistance to the reactionary integration of Western Europe, which the U.S. is pushing through using West German social democracy.

On this topic, a statement from the prisoners:

The entire discussion turns on this perspective. Mediated by the political-military attack, the repressive structuring of the entire capitalist machine becomes central to the system, and in this way the response to its decisive crisis is already anticipated.

Through the attack, capital's internal strategy is certainly and simultaneously disrupted by the obligation to react. They must mobilize their forces and dialectically this provokes an

1 An antifascist military coup heralded an end to the Portuguese Salazar dictatorship in 1974, setting off a popular but limited upheaval during which people occupied factories and seized land, while demanding retribution for the crimes of the fascist regime. The Portuguese Socialist Party (later the Social Democrat Party) was instrumental in reining in this revolt, and within a few years, the PS's Mario Soares was subjecting Portugal to IMF dictates and entering into a coalition with the ultra-right Democratic and Social Center Party.

2 Olaf Palme was the Social Democratic Prime Minister of Sweden from 1969 until his assassination in 1986.

3 The Second International, the international organization of social democratic parties.

overall understanding of resistance that includes the concept of revolution. An experience and an understanding of imperialism in the metropole reveals the clear necessity for fundamental opposition, both nationally and internationally. And it also develops a strategic line: the internationalism of the guerilla as the form of proletarian politics that is antagonistic to capitalist development in the context of the class war.

This is the case because of two coinciding factors:

Nationally, it is the tactic of resistance against fascism in the form of the terrorist national security state.

Internationally, in the strategic sub-centre of the U.S.A.—the Federal Republic—it serves an offensive function on behalf of the anti-imperialist liberation struggles.

Naturally, this tactical understanding is also the line the prisoners are asserting at the trial, about which it is still possible to say:

It is not enough to talk loudly about fascism—but presenting a defense at this trial makes sense if it clarifies the necessity and the possibility for armed resistance as a factor in political opposition here in the FRG—and this must be the case if it needs to be smashed as brutally as is the case in Stammheim.

And one must add—if it weren't for the RAF, what would anyone in France, Italy, Holland, or the Scandinavian states know about the reactionary role of social democracy in the Federal Republic?

Q. Is there not a danger of a collective conviction of the accused, as the prosecution evidently has difficulty proving the guilt of each individual on the basis of the evidence? And how is your concept of the “principal guiding function” for the Stammheim trial to be understood?

A. They were already convicted before the trial began, by the media hate campaign, by the prison conditions, by isolation, by sensory deprivation, by deprivation of water, by the attempt at a stereotactical intervention, by drugging during interrogation, etc.—and by statements made by the Chancellor during the parliamentary debates after the Stockholm action. State security murdered four prisoners in a single year: Holger Meins, Katharina Hammerschmidt, Siegfried Hausner, and Ulrike Meinhof. Meanwhile, isolation units have been built in about 15 prisons. There are not four, but about 120 prisoners who, in

this context, are subjected to the same prison conditions, and, out of these 120, 4 have been selected to support the “ringleader” construct.

In the last weeks before Ulrike’s murder, this treatment was focused on two of the prisoners, Andreas and Ulrike, as part of the psychological warfare strategy of personalizing revolutionary politics, and the policy of the intelligence services in all counterrevolutionary projects of cutting off the head.

Andreas is the prisoner against whom state security concentrated their hate campaign, because he organized both the collective politics of the group, even in the situation of complete isolation in prison, and the all-out defensive strategy. When the trial began, he no longer had a lawyer and he faced three counts of attempted murder.

Since 65, Ulrike had played a guiding ideological role for the revolutionary left in the Federal Republic. She was to be broken in the dead wing through white torture, pathologized, and eventually turned into a cretin with a brain operation, so as to be used in the trial as evidence against the RAF’s politics and against the broader anti-imperialist struggle in the FRG. Because the group struggled as a group, and we could still mobilize public opposition, this project had to be abandoned.

Then Ulrike was killed—as on each previous occasion when a conflict with the prisoners came to a head and became public knowledge, a RAF cadre was executed:

- Holger Meins, to break the hunger strike.
- Siegfried Hausner, during the action in Stockholm to free the prisoners, when the embassy was blown up by the Hamburg MEK to conceal their entry. Siegfried led the group and laid the explosives. He could have proved that the explosion was caused by West German state security. State security knew this when they removed him from the hospital in Stockholm. In order to liquidate him, they chose not to bring him to a hospital, but rather to keep him completely out of the public eye—for example, a visit from his lawyer, which he had demanded—they brought him to Stammheim’s hermetically-sealed hospital ward—where, without qualified medical attention, he died.
- Ulrike Meinhof, before the decisive intervention in the trial, by which the whole doctrine of the show trial was in danger of being turned against the BAW and the government.

Since the latest guerilla attack against the U.S. Headquarters in Frankfurt,¹ every day we must be prepared for the possibility that a prisoner may be murdered.

All of the legal proceedings against RAF prisoners are part of one single focused operation. The decision of the BAW to organize the trials separately reflects the information they have. In a regional trial, in which the BAW had no business, a former federal prosecutor suddenly appeared to organize the prosecution's strategy along the lines of the BAW's principal guiding function. There is the example of the former Federal Prosecutor Kirsch, who turned the trial in Kaiserslautern into a vehicle for the hate campaign against Andreas.

Stammheim's principal guiding function is to set the tone for the entire judiciary. The Stammheim measures establish a legal vacuum in which all trials are expected to run smoothly, even those with less propaganda value, less manipulation of the facts, and less witness preparation.

The Stammheim measures have a bottom-up effect. The court can and does proceed with the assumption that the higher authorities will sanction each of its measures. There is no appellate authority. The entire state—a monstrous counterinsurgency machine—stands behind the court.

The prisoners do not deny their responsibility for the RAF's attacks against the U.S. military installations in the Federal Republic or their policy of using military means against the U.S. genocide in Vietnam; not one RAF prisoner denies this. The defense strategy is to expose the role of the Federal Republic as a strategic sub-centre, and the fact that this role is both a necessary condition for and a function of the aggressive human rights violations and the belligerence of the U.S. war machine in Vietnam.

The Federal Republic is totally integrated into U.S. foreign policy and military strategy, both actively and passively. The Federal Republic is a supply base, a training center, a troop transfer point, a centre for the U.S. electronics and logistics used in Vietnam, a staging point, and rear base area in the war against Vietnam. From this it follows conclusively that, since the failure and disintegration of the opposition to the Vietnam War, everyone in the Federal Republic had and has, under human rights law, the right to armed resistance. These prisoners are

1 On June 2, 1976, the Revolutionary Cells bombed the U.S. Army Headquarters and U.S. Officers' Club in Frankfurt, carrying out the attack under the banner of the "Ulrike Meinhof Commando." That same day, two fully loaded military trucks at a U.S. airbase were blown up just outside of the city.

prisoners of war. Furthermore, when all means of protest against isolation torture available within this state have been exhausted, we must do what is necessary so that the prisoners are recognized as prisoners of war by the United Nations and the International Red Cross, and that, as a result, the prison conditions established in the Geneva Convention are applied.

Naturally, the prisoners don't deny that they were and are organized in the RAF, that they have struggled and still struggle as part of the RAF—if one can put it that way at this point—and that they have contributed to its analysis and strategy both conceptually and in practice.

What the national security state hopes to achieve with Stammheim, false witnesses, the manipulation of files, and the totally obscure charges—because “joint responsibility” does not exist in the Criminal Code here—is a blatantly farcical conviction, in which the true dimensions of the confrontation are meant to be overshadowed by proving concrete participation in the actions. The goal of neutralizing the politics of the conflict in an underwater ballet of thousands of BKA experts is also, therefore, absurd, because, given the documents and the facts that are known to us, no criminal indictments are possible.

Because the conflict is political, the state insists on understanding it in military terms: the moral, psychological, and physical extermination of “the enemy”—as Prinzing once let slip—at the level of criminalistics. What would be best in the view of the BAW would be one big high treason trial against all RAF prisoners. The clichéd elements of high treason—threatening the existence of the Federal Republic and its constitutional order by violence or threat of violence—are present in all the court decrees, charges, etc. against this group. But to do so would mean admitting that there exists fundamental political opposition within the Federal Republic and that revolutionary politics are possible even in this state.

That would not fit into the concept developed by social democracy. Their plan is to “quietly” and “decisively” maintain that the State of Emergency is the “normal state of affairs,” and they do this by all manner of manipulation, psychological warfare, repression, control, registration, police penetration of society and its social neutralization, and covert police actions. The normal state of affairs in the Federal Republic should be one in which there is no opposition to the presence of the U.S. military machine, U.S. capital, the state, or social democracy. That is wishful thinking, given that the RAF is a result of the politicization of the Vietnam opposition and of the proletarianization and declassing

that occurred in the 60s, and which led to an offensive break with the legality of the imperialist state.

Stammheim, where a mass of falsified and fabricated criminal details are meant to undermine the political content of the confrontation, makes it clear what the issue is in the Federal Republic: fascism. The filthy, old political machine we know so well, in a new and more monstrous form—no longer as a function of national monopoly capitalism, but as part of the globalization of U.S. capital.

The prisoners say that it is because of the strategic function that the Federal Republic plays for U.S. capital that the urban guerilla can destabilize things here—and it makes no difference how small a minority they are. Their strategy clarifies why it is extremely difficult to develop a revolutionary position in the Federal Republic, as well as why it is necessary to do so. That it is possible has been proven in the six years since the first action.