

## Cosmetics can't cover it

**Baader-Meinhof gang: children of Germany**

By A. Nikiforuk

*"The Anarchists . . . were anarchists because they did not believe in an anarchical world."*  
G.D.H. Cole*"A new facism, should it come, would have other colors and ideologies than the earlier ones. But there are analogies, even at the early stage: increasing harassment of uncomfortable gadflies then as now and increasing attempts to drive people into a corner where they can be labelled criminals."*

Helmus Gollwitzer, German theologian

West Germany boasts a stable and expanding economy, a miraculous achievement in an age of massive unemployment and high inflation.

The country's economy supports a liberal democracy noted for its welfare programs and a consumer society noted for its crassness.

An astute West German politician has admitted that his country lives solely on the "glory" of the "commercial efficiency of its economy."

Yet for all Germany's affluence and apparent well-being, the nation is beset by a group of anarchists and their mentor, angst. Anarchism and angst are two words I must define, for their meanings play a central role in this article.

Angst is a German word meaning fear, anxiety and anguish. Angst is a feeling that many of us exhibit when we enter York University.

A society that lacks moral and "spiritual" values, that has made labour a lifeless commodity and that has placed a dazzling technology and concrete progress before the welfare of the human spirit creates feelings of angst, of separateness and emptiness.

Angst is a reaction to a form of violence so subtle and pervasive that we hesitate to call it violence. This is the violence of a system that makes money by exploiting labour, human tragedies, sex and sentiment. Where there is angst the anarchist fashions his creed.

Anarchy is derived from the Greek words *an* and *arkhé*. These words mean an absence of government and lack of external authority. Thus, the anarchist is an enemy of the State, be it a democracy or a dictatorship.

The anarchist considers "bourgeois" or parliamentary democracy a farce, an institution that expresses the will of the middle class. The anarchist believes that social responsibility can not be imposed upon an individual but must rise from within that individual.

An anarchist understands Bakunin's words that, "man can fulfill his free individuality only by complementing it through all the individuals around him and only through work and the collective force of society."

In this respect every anarchist is a socialist but not every socialist is an anarchist.

Lastly, the anarchist is an individual who champions action. He replaces rhetoric and the voting box with "propoganda by deed".

The Red Army Faction ("Rote Armee Fraktion") or Baader-Meinhof group, claims to be an anarchist organization. One of the theorists of the group, Horst Mahler, has stated that, "You don't

talk to capitalism's lackeys, you shoot them".

Since its inception in 1970 the RAF has bombed American military installations, assassinated judges, kidnapped politicians, robbed banks and most recently has murdered Hans Schleyer, a prominent West German capitalist, an ex-Nazi and S.S. member.

The ideology of the RAF is indeed one of action. Moreover, the group has directed its attacks against the state, state functionaries, and "capitalist institutions".

The RAF is composed of members of West Germany's middle class. Ulrike Meinhof, one of the group's founders, was a popular leftist journalist with a university degree before she became an urban guerrilla.

It is believed that Meinhof committed suicide in prison in 1976.

Gudrun Ensslin was a literature major. Jan-Carl Raspe was a sociologist.

Andres Baader was the only member of the group that one could not characterize as an "intellectual". To many he represented a token "working class element" in the organization and to others a disagreeable adventurer.

Ensslin, Raspe and Baader were reported to have committed suicide last week in Stuttgart prison.

Women play an important if not dominant role in the RAF. Ten of the sixteen members now being sought by police for the murder of Schleyer are women.

However, this is not an outstanding characteristic of the group for women have assumed positions of leadership in many urban guerrilla movements.

"I'VE DECIDED TO GROW UP TO BE A FANTASTIC, SEXY CREATURE WHO MARRIES A MILLIONAIRE TO HELP FINANCE THE REVOLUTION."



Italy's Armed Revolutionary Nuclei and Mexico's 23rd of September Movement are two excellent examples.

The radicalism of the RAF has academic roots. Its members have studied capitalist society and have observed its injustices. Their radicalism is purely the product of an intellectual angst.

The militancy of the group is not the result of having to cope with "objective conditions", with hunger, unemployment, or job dissatisfaction.

Consequently, one finds in the group a contempt for the common man.

The West German anarchist has arrived at a conclusion without suffering while the West German people are experiencing a moral and spiritual crisis without arriving at a conclusion.

The anarchist, through his actions, states the conclusion, that the capitalist state is inhuman.

He or she expects the West German people to perceive this statement as a holy revelation, without ever having to teach the people why and how this conclusion has been arrived at.

Many members of the RAF have chosen Mao Tse-Tung and Che Guevara as their models. They have selected, perhaps unknowingly, men who were ascetic revolutionaries.

Though many members of the RAF have proven to be well-disciplined fighters, they are not ascetics. Andres Baader was asked to leave a Palestinian guerrilla

training camp because of his drug addictions and sexual activities.

The group has also been accused of using stolen bank money to support "jetset" lifestyles. If such accounts are true then one might describe members of the RAF as orgiastic revolutionaries.

The actual membership of the RAF has escaped the scrutiny of the West German government which carefully monitors the activities of the "extreme Left".

The Bureau for the Protection of the Constitution estimates that 110,000 people, divided into 243 organizations, represent West Germany's "extreme Left". Originally the RAF was thought to be composed of two dozen people.

This figure was later revised to two hundred. Federal police have recently offered a figure of one thousand two hundred.

Either the RAF is growing or Germans are poor mathematicians. The former is unlikely.

The West German government has reacted to the RAF by spending millions of dollars for police training and security equipment. Five million dollars alone were spent on a courthouse used for the trial of Ulrike Meinhof and Andres Baader.

In 1972 the government adopted a decree "to exclude from public service (including teachers) all those who sought to destroy the West German Federal Republic from within." This decree precipitated a major "communist witchhunt" that went unreported in the Western press.

To this day "loyalty checks" on government workers are a standard practice.

The government has also been accused of manipulating the law to suit its own ends and the police of torturing "political prisoners". The fact that five RAF members have died in German jails is in itself a damning statement.

The urban guerrilla has been described as a "herald of decline", as an iconoclast who holds a mirror before the ugly face of Western society. Repelled by its reflection, Western society reaches for swift cosmetic solutions to quiet its fears.

It abandons justice and attempts to improve its image by destroying other images.

There is little that is admirable in the West German anarchist. He is not a Tupamaro. But then, there is little that is admirable in a society overcome with angst.

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