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Contents

List of Figures 4
Abbreviations 5
Acknowledgements 6
Abstract 7
Declaration 8

Introduction 9

1. Situating the Subject – The Historical, Political, Theoretical and Methodological Background of this Study 22
1.1. Historical and Political Context 22
1.1.1. The Protest and Student Movement in West Germany 22
1.1.2. The New Women’s Movement 34
1.2. The Armed Struggle of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ – a Brief Overview 47
1.3. Theoretical Background 59
1.3.1. Terrorism and Political Violence 59
1.3.2. Previous Scholarship on Women’s Involvement in Political Violence 66
1.4. Methodological Framework 76
1.4.1. The Vital Critique of New Feminist Materialisms 76
1.4.2. The Untapped Potential of Theories of Sexual Difference 81
1.4.3. British Cultural Studies – Exploring the Materiality of (Militant) Subcultures 87
1.4.4. Research Methods 91

2. The Red Army Faction 99
2.1 Introduction 99
2.2 Existing Literature and Data Collection 104
2.3 History 110
2.4 Ideology 114
2.5 Activities 123
2.6 Case Study: The Liberation of Andreas Baader in May 1970 128
2.6.1 The Context 128
2.6.2 The Attack 133
2.6.3 Public Responses 138
2.6.4 The First Trial Against Members of the RAF 144
2.6.5 Discussion: A Tactical Use of Femininity as Camouflage 149
### The Movement of June Second

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Existing Literature and Data Collection
3.3 History
  3.3.1 The Subcultural Background of the MJ2
  3.3.2 First Forms of Organised Political Militancy
  3.3.3 Formation and Disintegration of the MJ2
3.4 Ideology
3.5 Activities
3.6 Case Study: The Abduction of Peter Lorenz in February 1975
  3.6.1 The Context
  3.6.2 The Attack
  3.6.3 Public Responses
  3.6.4 Discussion: Doing and Undoing Gender Underground

### The Revolutionary Cells

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Existing Literature and Data Collection
4.3 History
  4.3.1 The Formation of the First Revolutionary Cell
  4.3.2 From One to Many Revolutionary Cells
  4.3.3 The Separation From the ‘International’ Cell
  4.3.4 Feminism in the RC
4.4 Ideology
4.5 Activities
4.6 Case Study: The Bombing at the Federal Court of Justice in March 1975
  4.6.1 The Context
  4.6.2 The Attack
  4.6.3 Public Responses
  4.6.4 Discussion: A Struggle on Two Fronts

### The Red Zora

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Data Collection: Green Tea with the Red Zora
5.3 History
  5.3.1 Militant Feminist Group in the RC (1977 – 1984)
  5.3.2 Independent Women’s Guerrilla (1984 – 1995)
5.4 Ideology
5.5 Activities
5.6 Case Study: The Arson Attacks against the Clothing Chain ‘Adler’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.6.1 The Context</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.2 The Attack</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.3 Public Responses</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6.4 Discussion: Reflective and Proactive Solidarity</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

**Appendix**

**Bibliography**
### List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image 1</td>
<td>Flyer by a Women’s Group in the SDS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Attacks by Militant Leftist Groups in the FRG 1968-80</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 2</td>
<td>Wanted Poster Ulrike Meinhof</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 3</td>
<td>Wanted Poster RAF</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 4</td>
<td>The RAF ‘Baby’ Bomb</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 5</td>
<td>Police Handouts on Ulrike Meinhof 1972</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 6</td>
<td>Photograph Confiscated during Ulrike Meinhof’s arrest</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 7 and 8</td>
<td>Police Photographs of Masks</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 9</td>
<td>Election Poster with Picture of Peter Lorenz</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 10</td>
<td>The Hostage Peter Lorenz</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 11</td>
<td>The bombing at the Israeli Transport Office</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 12</td>
<td>Basic Incendiary Device Used in RC Attack</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 13</td>
<td>The Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 14</td>
<td>Alarm Clock Used for Bomb by the Red Zora</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 15</td>
<td>Claim of Responsibility by the Red Zora</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 16</td>
<td>EMMA: ‘Clandestine Joy’</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 17</td>
<td>Attacked Adler Stores</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APO</td>
<td>Außerparlamentarische Opposition [Extraparliamentary Opposition]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAK</td>
<td>Bundesarchiv Koblenz [The Federal Archives, Koblenz]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCS</td>
<td>Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDU</td>
<td>Christdemokratische Union Deutschlands [Christian Democratic Union of Germany]</td>
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<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Deutschmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>Freie Demokratische Partei Deutschlands [Free Democratic Party Germany]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFBIZ</td>
<td>Frauenforschungs-, -bildung- und -informationszentrum e.V. [Women’s Research and Education Centre]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMT</td>
<td>Frauenmediaturm [Women’s media tower]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS</td>
<td>Hamburger Institut für Sozialgeschichte [Hamburg Institute for Social Research]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IISH</td>
<td>International Institute of Social History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITT</td>
<td>International Telephone &amp; Telegraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K1/K2</td>
<td>Kommune 1 und 2 [Commune No 1 and 2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJ2</td>
<td>Movement of June Second [Bewegung 2. Juni]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Red Army Faction [Rote Armee Fraktion]</td>
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<td>RC</td>
<td>Revolutionary Cells [Revolutionäre Zellen]</td>
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<td>RZ</td>
<td>Red Zora [Rote Zora]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDS</td>
<td>Sozialistischer Studentenbund [Socialist German Student League]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands [Social Democratic Party of Germany]</td>
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<td>taz</td>
<td>Die Tageszeitung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TdF</td>
<td>Terre des Femmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TW</td>
<td>Tupamaros Westberlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WoRC</td>
<td>Women of the Revolutionary Cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Abstract

This dissertation offers a qualitative study of female participation in leftist political violence in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1970. It focuses on four militant leftist groups: the ‘Red Army Faction’ (RAF), the ‘Movement of June 2’ (MJ2), the ‘Revolutionary Cells’ (RC), and the ‘Red Zora’ (RZ). Unlike the RAF, the MJ2 has attracted little attention by scholars and journalists; and there is virtually no literature on the RC and the RZ. To offer a nuanced analysis of the history, ideologies and activities of the four groups, this thesis draws on semi-structured interviews with former group members and contemporary witnesses, autobiographical accounts, scholarly literature, newspaper articles, and a range of archival sources. The guiding questions for the analysis are: what roles have women played in the four organisations and in concrete manifestations of political violence? And, to what extent could female participation in political violence be understood as a form of feminist militancy? To answer these questions, this study combines theories and methods from new feminist materialisms, philosophies of sexual difference, gender theory and Cultural Studies. It finds that whilst opposing the existing gender regime, women in the RAF and MJ2 effectively used femininity as camouflage to carry out violent attacks. Neither groups had a feminist agenda. The RZ and some of the women in the RC, by contrast, took up central themes in the women’s movement. This thesis argues that their activities evolved into a form of feminist militancy. Beyond the specific context of research on political violence in Germany, this study makes a more general contribution to scholarship on female participation in armed conflicts, as it works towards a methodological and conceptual approach that accounts for the material-discursive nature of political violence, and for situational dynamics and gendered performances during concrete attacks.
Declaration and Inclusion of Material from a Prior Thesis

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree. However, the case study in Chapter 2 draws, among other sources, on archival material that I have used for my MPhil thesis at the University of Utrecht in 2009 and for a chapter in the anthology Der Linksterrorismus der 1970er Jahre und die Ordnung der Geschlechter, edited by Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Dirk van Laak (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2013).
Introduction

Study Focus, Research Questions and Sources

Women’s involvement in political violence is an area that has all too often been neglected or mistreated: both in general, and in the specific context of West German militant movements. Although women were active participants in political violence in Germany during the 1970s and 1980s, their role has not been given the critical and scholarly attention it requires. Research on this area often continues to treat female militants as exceptional, and fails to provide an analysis that can break through media caricatures of ‘anarchist Amazons’ and ‘female supermen’ (Rosenfeld 2010: 352, for notable exceptions see: Diewald-Kerkmann 2009, Colvin 2009, Bielby 2010 and 2012, Grisard 2011). This narrow perception is not helped by the fact that researchers have rarely sought to investigate the points of connection, and of tension, between militancy, feminist politics, and the women’s movements of the period, nor by the fact that writers have largely focused on the more spectacular activities of the Red Army Faction (RAF) (see, e.g. Wunschik 1997, Varon 2004, Kraushaar 2006, Aust 2008, Elter 2008, Bielby 2010) and to a lesser extent the Movement of June 2nd (MJ2) (Della Porta 1995, Schiffer 2001, Wunschik 2006, Dahlke 2007), paying little attention to other groups that more actively engaged with feminist issues and practices.

This neglect is tied to a question of political as well as theoretical importance. We need to challenge the gendered perpetrator/victim dichotomy, within which men are only perpetrators and women only victims of violence. This is not to deny the facts about male violence
against women.¹ Since the 1970s, feminist activists and researchers in Germany and many other countries have played a major role in raising public awareness of domestic violence against women and in creating supporting networks for women who have been subject to violence. There is good reason for violence against women in times of peace and war to remain a central topic in women’s movements. At the same time, maintaining an exclusive focus on female victims risks perpetuating gender stereotypes, obscures a richer understanding of the roles of gender in violence, and ultimately does not serve feminist political projects.

While the existing body of knowledge suggests that most violence against men is carried out by other men,² there are also women who abuse their partners and children; and women, too, actively participate in armed conflicts and acts of political violence. In the past, a comprehensive analysis within feminist research of women’s roles in structures of violence was undermined by a tendency to present women, in the words of the feminist sociologist Christina Herkommer, ‘as the better half of humanity’ (Herkommer 2007: 26). A number of recent studies have shown that not only men but also women ‘are capturing hostages, engaging in suicide bombings, hijacking airplanes, and abusing prisoners’ (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007: 1). This thesis shows that in West

¹ According to a survey from January 2012, 40% of women in Germany are or have been victims of physical violence or sexual abuse since the age of 16 (Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Gesundheit von Frauen in Deutschland 2012: 9). The same study finds that about half of violent attacks against women are carried out by male partners and ex-partners (ibid.: 13).
² A number of recent publications rightly emphasise that men are not only perpetrators but also victims of violence and abuse. A German pilot study on the subject indicates that 23% of men have experienced physical or sexual violence in relationships on at least one occasion (Violence against men 2004: 12). Yet there is still little awareness of, or research on, the subject of violence against men and boys (for pioneering studies on the subject see, e.g. Mezey and King 1992, Synnott 2009, for research on violence against men in Germany specifically, see: Jungnitz et al. 2007, Gahleitner 2007).
Germany women have also played a prominent role in less spectacular acts of political violence such as sabotaging ticket machines, causing disruption in sex shops, or setting fires in department stores that rely on the exploitation of women’s labour in the Third World.

The contribution of this thesis is to offer a qualitative study of female participation in leftist political violence in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) since 1970. Since the first attacks by militant leftist groups in the early 1970s, the active involvement of women in these groups has attracted high media attention. Yet there are to date only a few detailed analyses on the subject (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009, Bandhauer-Schöffmann 2009, Melzer 2009, Bielby 2012). Previous publications on female participation in political violence in West Germany focus without exception on two militant groups: the Red Army Faction (RAF) and the Movement of June Second (MJ2). I believe that the existing literature offers vital insights into the personal and political backgrounds of women in these two groups, but – like any body of research – it comes with thematic restrictions and methodological limitations. Furthermore, women have been actively involved in a range of militant groups in the FRG that have not been the subject of study.

A recent example shows that women’s active involvement in armed conflicts and political violence in Germany is by no means limited to militant leftist groups. In 2012, court proceedings were opened against Beate Zschäpe, a former member of the ‘National Socialist Underground’. According to the charges, Zschäpe played a leading role in this militant Neo-Nazi group that is held responsible for 10 brutal killings, 15 robberies and serious arson (Hipp et al. 2012). It should further be noted that since
the European Court of Justice ruled in 2000 that the Federal Armed Forces have to accept female soldiers, thousands of women joined the military service (Gaschke 2005). So why look only at leftist violence? One immediate reason is practical: during the period of study (the 1970s and 1980s), there were no female soldiers in the army, and evidence suggests that there were virtually no women in militant rightist organisations (Schmidtchen 1981: 23). However, the main reason is that a study of these particular groups offers us valuable political and theoretical insights. The leftist groups in question emerged from a broader political environment in which the post-1968 student movement, the ‘New Left’, and in particular the ‘New Women’s Movement’ brought women’s issues to the fore. The study of these groups thus leads to the exploration of the intricate relationship between militancy and feminist concerns, voices, and practices.

My research project examines the roles of women in four militant leftist networks in West Germany: the RAF, the MJ2, the ‘Revolutionary Cells’ (RC) and the Red Zora (RZ). As we shall see, there were significant tactical and political differences between these organisations. Yet they had three things in common. Firstly, women constituted a significant part of their membership. Secondly, female group members played a range of roles ranging from carrying messages to taking leading positions. Thirdly, they deemed the use of physical force against property, and in many cases people, to be a necessary part of national and international political interventions. Since there is virtually no research on the RC and RZ, a part of this study breaks completely new ground. What further distinguishes this study from previous publications on female
participation in political violence in West Germany is that it gives a detailed account of women’s roles in concrete manifestations of political violence.

Beyond the specific context of West Germany, this study makes a more general contribution to scholarship on female participation in armed conflicts, as it works towards a methodological and conceptual approach to political violence that accounts for its material-discursive nature (an idea I will explore in Chapter 1), and enables us to explore situational dynamics and gendered performances during concrete attacks. The literature review in Chapter 1 illustrates that a great part of recent publications on female participation in political violence in Germany draws on forms of discursive and textual analysis to study representations of violent women in dominant discourses in the 1970s.

While this approach has been immensely productive for scholarship on women’s involvement in political violence, it has led de facto to a lack of attention to lived, material bodies and evolving corporeal practices. This study combines theories and methods from new feminist materialisms, European philosophies of sexual difference, Anglo-American gender theories and Cultural Studies to develop an alternative approach to female participation in political violence. This thesis shows that theories of sexual difference, which have so far been largely ignored or dismissed by scholars in the field, provide the theoretical foundation for an approach to political violence that accounts for ‘the mutual interdependence of material, biocultural, and symbolic forces in the making of social and political practices’ (Braidotti 2010: 203-204).
Two guiding questions for my discussion of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ are: firstly, what roles have women played in these four organisations and in concrete manifestations of political violence? Secondly, to what extent could female participation in political violence in West Germany be understood as a form of feminist militancy? The first question enables me to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on female participation in political violence in West Germany in two ways. Firstly, I analyse female participation in groups that have not yet been discussed by studies in this field. Secondly, by focusing not only on ideologies and structures of the four groups but also on concrete attacks, this thesis contributes to a better understanding of the role of sexual difference in concrete manifestations of violence. My interest in the second question is of a theoretical and political nature. If it is addressed at all, militancy plays a marginal role in studies of the German women’s movement. As a feminist researcher and activist, I wonder why. Is militant feminist protest so rare that it does not deserve a place in feminist historiography? Or is there no such thing as feminist militancy, because militant protest is irreconcilable with feminist politics?

In order to answer these questions, I have collected and analysed data from a range of sources. I agree with Donatella Della Porta that ‘[i]n order to build a more balanced account of events and circumstances, official sources have to be combined with other sources, in particular with material from inside the radical organisations’ (Della Porta 1995: 19). To offer a nuanced analysis of female participation in political violence, I draw both on internal sources such as autobiographies, pamphlets and public statements by members of the four groups, as well as on external
sources including police files, scholarly literature, newspaper articles, and court proceedings. Most of the data used in this thesis comes from archives, while a part was collected in interviews. During the research for this thesis, I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven former group members and with dozens of contemporary witnesses. Since many of the participants in this study have not discussed their views and experiences in public before, it constitutes a major achievement that they agreed to be interviewed for this research project. With this privilege came a high level of responsibility at all stages of the research process. In the section on methodology and research methods in Chapter 1, I explain how I dealt with this responsibility.

**Thesis Structure**

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the historical, theoretical and methodological background of this study. My discussion of the historical context focuses on the important roles played by the student movement and the New Women’s Movement in West Germany for the development of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ. The first chapter also provides a synopsis of the armed struggle of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ, and draws attention to a number of similarities and differences between the groups that are essential to better understand female participation in them. The last three sections of the first chapter introduce the theories, methodologies and methods that are used in this study. I begin by explaining why this thesis refers to ‘political violence’ rather than ‘terrorism’, and how this study ties in with the existing body of literature on my topic. Then I discuss three theoretical frameworks that are of particular importance for my analysis:
new feminist materialisms, theories of sexual difference, and British Cultural Studies. Finally, the chapter offers a detailed account of the data collection used and of ethical and political challenges faced during the research process.

Chapters 2 to 5 focus on the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ in turn. Apart from discussing the history, ideology, structure and activities of the four groups, the chapters in this section provide case studies of concrete attacks. The case study research design occupies a central position in archaeology, sociology, political science and a range of other fields, although it has not been without criticism\(^3\). This thesis hopes to show that case studies can be useful tools for exploring the material-discursive practices that create political violence. Following John Gerring, I understand a case study in this context as ‘the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases’ (Gerring 2007: 20). The case studies in Chapters 2 to 5 do not claim to be representative of the full range of activities of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ. However, they provide insights into gendered performances of political violence and exhibit important commonalities in each group’s tactics and methods.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, access to data was often severely restricted. The primary criterion in the selection of case studies was therefore the quantity and quality of sources. In order to provide an in-depth discussion of a particular attack, I had to make sure

\(^3\) According to John Gerring, most methodologists view the case study format ‘with extreme circumspection’ because they find fault with ‘biased case selection, informal and undisciplined research designs, weak empirical leverage [...], subjective conclusions, nonreplicability and causal determinism’ (Gerring 2007: 6).
that I could combine and critically compare insights from a range of internal and external sources. While several events in the history of the RAF and MJ2 fulfil this criterion, it proved considerably more difficult to find well-documented attacks by the RC and RZ. A second criterion for the selection of case studies was that the data collected gave clear evidence that women were actively involved in the attacks. This applies to all attacks by the Red Zora but only to some of the other groups’ actions. Finally, I have chosen attacks that allowed me to analyse gendered tactics that were not limited to these events but can be observed in a number of attacks by the same group. The sections on activities in Chapters 2 to 5 contextualise the attacks discussed in the case studies and document tactical similarities between these and other events in the history of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ. In the Conclusion, I return to these tactical features and discuss if and how they could be relevant to understanding female participation in political violence in other geopolitical contexts.

**Thesis Findings**

A central finding of this study is that motives for and forms of female participation in political violence in West Germany varied between and within militant groups. While this conclusion might sound obvious, most of the existing literature on the subject pays little attention to these constitutive differences. In line with previous research, this thesis finds that the RAF and MJ2 did not have a feminist agenda, although the media tended to present female members of these groups as feminists. My study shows that the RZ and a part of the women in the Revolutionary Cells identified as feminists, and that their actions of the 1970s and 1980s took
up central themes in the New Women’s Movement. Paradoxically, although a heated public debate on feminism and political violence took place in the 1970s, discussions paid little attention to actual militant feminist activities. Previous studies have found that the prominent role of feminism in terrorism discourses in the 1970s was a response to a perceived threat by the women’s movement, rather than stemming from an analysis of the motives and politics of women in militant groups (Bandhauer-Schöffmann 2009, Vukadinović 2004 and 2010, Grisard 2011). Chapters 2 to 5 offer a discussion of the four groups and their activities that explores the different ways in which women related to feminist ideas and principles and that considers other constitutive differences between and within these militant networks.

Chapter 2 shows that, in an orthodox Marxist vein, the RAF considered the woman question to be a ‘side contradiction’⁴. The structure of the RAF was more centralised and hierarchical than that of the MJ2, RC and RZ. However, autobiographical accounts by former group members indicate that women in the RAF considered themselves equal to their male comrades in every regard. Female group members found it liberating to take up arms and to fight side by side with men against the existing political order. A closer examination of the group’s activities reveals that the gendered tactics of women in the RAF often stood in flagrant contradiction to their emphasis on gender equality. More than any other militant group in West Germany, the RAF is associated

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⁴ Following Mao Tse-tung, the RAF argued that the ‘principle contradiction’ [Hauptwiderspruch] is that of antagonistic classes (RAF 1997: 41-52). According to this theory, colonial exploitation, sexism and other forms of oppression are ‘side contradictions’ [Nebenwidersprüche]. This means that they depend on the principle contradiction and will be resolved, if the class system is overcome.
with a tactical use of femininity as camouflage. Chapter 2 traces this tactic back to the first attack by the group in 1970, during which women made effective use of feminine accessories and stereotypes to liberate a fellow member from prison. The case study indicates that this first recourse to femininity as camouflage was the result of situational dynamics rather than of a conscious decision. Yet Chapter 2 provides evidence that the RAF soon went on to use femininity as camouflage in a more systematic manner.

Although the MJ2 occasionally referred to women’s issues, they clearly did not constitute a priority to the group. Personal statements by former members indicate that, similar to women in the RAF, female members of the MJ2 did not identify as feminists. Yet they, too, found it liberating to take up arms, and they wanted to be equals to their male comrades. Founded more than a year after the RAF, the MJ2 set itself the aim of being less intellectualist, more egalitarian and more popular than the RAF. The case study in Chapter 3 indicates that the group realised these goals at least in part. During the six-day long abduction of the politician Peter Lorenz in 1975, kidnappers of different genders rotated all tasks, and no group member acted as official leader or spokesperson. Despite their unisex disguise, the hostage quickly learned to distinguish between male and female kidnappers. Conversations between the captors and the hostage illustrate that, to a greater or lesser extent, all have drawn on the dominant gender norms. Like the RAF, women in the MJ2 used femininity as camouflage on several occasions. To this day, former members present the MJ2 as a militant subculture that allowed them a life and struggle outside social conventions and gender norms. While the
group might have opposed the prevailing gender regime, it did not escape it. When using femininity as camouflage, the MJ2 in fact made effective use of prevailing gender norms.

Chapter 4 shows how members of the RC began in the mid-1970s to carry out attacks with a distinctively feminist agenda. On 4 March 1975, a group calling itself ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ planted a bomb at the Federal Court in Justice to protest against its decision to uphold the abortion ban. Chapter 4 offers a detailed discussion of the attack, which received considerably less attention in the German media than attacks by the RAF and MJ2 shortly before and after the bombing. The RC was a network of loosely connected autonomous groups that aimed to carry out militant actions in support of existing campaigns and social movements, including the women’s movement. To contribute to a better understanding of the complex role of feminism in the RC, I distinguish between three positions among women in the RC. The (female) militant wanted to be an equal to her male comrades. Yet she was no feminist and identified not primarily as a woman but as a revolutionary. Many women in the RAF and MJ2 can also be seen as taking this stance. The feminist militant engaged with feminist ideas and wanted to see women’s issues on the political agenda of the RC. The struggle for women’s liberation was a genuine concern to her, but neither her only nor her main focus. In distinction, the militant feminist approached the armed struggle with a radical feminist stance. She considered the exploitation of women to be one of the earliest and most universal forms of oppression and a governing principle in patriarchal structures, and set out to put feminist
politics into practice on all levels of her militant involvement, including personal relationships, ideology, structure, tactics and targets.

Chapter 5 offers the first scholarly attempt to discuss the ideology and activities of the Red Zora. In 1977, a group of militant feminists in the RC began to carry out attacks under this name. The RZ adopted a number of structural and political principles from the RC, but its radical feminist stance distinguished it from other groupings within the network. In 1984, the RZ split off from the RC because it felt that it had become solely responsible for women’s issues within the RC. Chapter 5 argues that the Red Zora developed a notion of feminist counter-violence that differed considerably from the approach of the RAF, MJ2, RC and other militant groups at the time. In the context of the group’s ideological framework, counter-violence has a double meaning. On the one hand, it implies recourse to violence for defensive rather than aggressive reasons. On the other hand, it signals the way in which the RZ promoted a concept of violence that stood in opposition to prevailing notions of violence. The case study in Chapter 5 illustrates how the RZ put this approach into practice.
1. Situating the Subject – The Historical, Political, Theoretical and Methodological Background of this Study

1.1 Historical and Political Context

1.1.1 The Protest and Student Movement in West Germany

The protests in 1968 in West Germany never reached the size of the anti-rearmament demonstrations of the 1950s (Klimke and Scharloth 2008: 98), nor did they develop the broad appeal of the Peace Movement in the 1980s (Cooper 1996: 151). But more than any other events they have come to stand for political protest and generational change in post-WWII Germany. Edgar Wolfrum points out how in recent studies,

which gathered momentum in the mid-1990s, 1968 and its repercussions have meant many things at once: political protest movement, generational conflict, cultural revolution, renaissance of Marxist thought, coming to terms with Germany’s National Socialist history, breakthrough of more liberal sexual morals, the beginnings of the New Women’s Movement, a minimisation and legitimisation of violence, even terrorism.5 (Wolfrum 2001: 29)


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5 'Im Lichte der neueren Forschung, die intensiv Mitte der neunziger Jahre eingesetzt hat, waren ’68 und die Folgen vieles zugleich: politische Protestbewegung, Generationenkonflikt, Kulturrevolution, Renaissance marxistischen Denkens, Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus, Durchbruch einer liberalen Sexualmoral, Entstehung einer neuen Frauenbewegung, Verharmlosung und Legitimation von Gewalt bis hin zum Terrorismus'
Rather, drawing on this now substantial literature, this section provides a brief overview of the student and protest movement in the 1960s in order to prepare and contextualise the discussion of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ.

There are three main reasons why such an overview can help to work towards a better understanding of leftist political violence in Germany. Firstly, more than a few founding members of the four groups at the centre of this study were active in the student and protest movement before taking up arms (Della Porta 1995: 114, Kraushaar 2008: 23). Secondly, the student movement provided important theoretical and political reference points for the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ. Thirdly, discussions on the legitimacy of violence in the student movement and in leftist circles clearly influenced the militant politics of the four groups. While each group developed its own approach to violence, all shared the belief that violence could be legitimate and necessary to fight against imperialist and fascist structures, and it was such structures that they believed they detected in the FRG. Although they did not draw the same conclusions as the founding members of the RAF and other militant leftist groups, a number of other groups and individuals in the student movement shared this view. This said, it would be wrong to depict the emergence of the armed struggle in West Germany in the 1970s as a direct result of these movements in the 1960s (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 139). Belinda Davis rightly emphasises that the overwhelming majority of leftist

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6 Not least because of 'anniversaries' such as '40 years 1968' in 2008, the body of literature on the subject has grown exponentially in recent years.
activists in West Germany at no point considered violence to be an appropriate political means in Western countries (Davis 2006).

The 1960s in a range of Western countries including the FRG saw a number of groups emerge ‘at the Left of the Old Left’ and go on to make up what became known as the ‘New Left’ (Della Porta 1995: 24). While there were significant political and ideological differences among them all shared, as Della Porta notes, ‘a concern for a [more] participatory democracy’ (ibid: 24). ‘In its rejection of orthodox Marxism and anti-Communism and its dissatisfaction with the Cold War, materialism, and apathy in society’ the New Left in West Germany, write Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, ‘found a connecting point to similar movements in France, Great Britain, the United States and elsewhere’ (Klimke and Scharloth 2008: 100). However, due to Germany’s fascist history and its geo-political position in the Cold War, the social context in which the New Left developed in the FRG had a distinctive character. In the 1950s, not only the majority of military officers and judges but also many politicians and other public figures had actively supported or sympathised with the Nazi regime (Varon 2004: 33). The ‘68 movement in West Germany was, among other things, a rebellion by a post-war generation that refused the authority of this ruling elite. Karin de Ahna and Dieter Claessens highlight that due to the long-lasting ideological and social effects of its National Socialist past, the Federal Republic of Germany ‘has never had a traditional relationship to social phenomena such as anarchism, deviance and so on [...]. The willingness to see the dissenter as an enemy of the
state or of the people remained, at least until the late 1950s, unchanged” (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 23).

The republic’s first government under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer adopted politically and economically a pro-Western and anti-communist course (Narr 2008). All forms of political opposition and extra-parliamentary campaigns in this period were ‘from the outset seriously handicapped by the relative ease with which Adenauer was able to tar them with the brush of communism’ (Burns and Will 1988: 9). Soon, communists and socialists ‘found themselves outside the spectrum of legitimate politics’ (Scheerer 1988: 221). In 1956, the communist party was banned in West Germany. With the Godesberg programme of 1959, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) distanced itself once and for all from its socialist heritage (Klimke and Scharloth 2008: 98). In 1966, the SPD formed a grand coalition with the Conservative Party (Lindner 1996: 93). Since it had the necessary majority in parliament, the grand coalition could pass fundamental reforms such as the 1968 emergency laws without noticeable resistance (for a more detailed discussion, see: Reichardt 2008). Facing a lack of active political participation, a number of leftist groups in West Germany united to form an extra-parliamentary opposition [Außerparlamentarische Opposition, short: APO] (cf. Von Dirke 1997: 34). Students and other members of the APO used this organisation as a platform for debate and protest outside of party politics.

7 ‘nie ein traditionelles Verhältnis zu Erscheinungen wie Anarchismus, Abweichung usw. gehabt […] Die Bereitschaft, den Abweichler als Staats- oder Volksfeind zu sehen, ist geblieben, - mindestens war sie bis Ende der 50er Jahre unverändert.’

8 The emergency legislation that the Grand Coalition passed in 1968 was met with fierce resistance from other political parties, and from the extra-parliamentary opposition and a range of other groups, because it ‘threatened to expand the powers of the executive branch at the expense of constitutional rights in the event of an internal or external state emergency’ (Klimke and Scharloth 2008: 98).
The student movement in West Germany had originated in the mid-1960s in Berlin and spread quickly throughout the country (Della Porta 1995: 37). The Socialist German Student League (SDS)\(^9\) played a central role in the theory, development and coordination of the emerging student movement.\(^10\) As ‘the main representative of the New Left, it built on the organisational and personal networks of the Easter March campaign, a movement for peace and nuclear disarmament supported by the German trade unions, which had gathered momentum at the beginning of the 1960s’ (Klimke and Scharloth 2008: 98-99). In the course of the 1960s, the number of female students at West German universities grew significantly. In 1965, the share of female students still accounted for only 28\%, but quickly rose to 37.9\% by 1970 (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 51). Women played an active role in the student and protest movements, although only a few publications focus on their contributions (see, e.g. Bendkowski 1999, Kätzel 2002).

Central themes in the student movement of the 1960s included university reforms, German rearmament plans, the Vietnam War, fascism, imperialism and internationalism. The ‘reconstruction of the repressed traditions of Marxism and psychoanalysis through the theoreticians of the Frankfurt school’ constituted the theoretical point of departure for many students (Von Dirke 1997: 33). In the late 1960s, Rudi Dutschke and other leading thinkers of the movement promoted a

\(^9\) SDS (=Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund), not to be confused with the US movement of the same period ‘Students for a Democratic Society’. Jeremy Varon’s comparative study *Bringing the war home: the Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and the revolutionary violence in the sixties and seventies* offers a detailed discussion of the two student organisations and their roles in the development of militant politics in West Germany and the US (Varon 2004).

\(^{10}\) For a detailed discussion of the development of the SDS and the APO, see: Fichter/Lönnedonker 1976, Richter 1998.
globalisation of revolutionary forces based on ‘foco theories’ of Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and Régis Debray (see Chapter 2) and on Frantz Fanon’s liberation concepts (Gilcher-Holtey 2008: 244). ‘At the 1967 national convention, Rudi Dutschke and Hans-Jürgen Krahl, the leading theoretician of the Frankfurt SDS, jointly demanded that SDS should move toward a “propaganda of action” in the metropolis, complementing the “propaganda of bullets” in the Third World’ (Klimke and Scharloth 2008: 101). Inspired by demonstrations in the US and other countries, students in West Germany drew on innovative and predominantly non-violent forms of protest such as sit-ins, teach-ins and ‘direct action’. According to Della Porta, the dominant position in the SDS in the 1960s involved ‘the limited violation of rules (begrenzte Regelverletzung), that is, a conscious, non-violent use of lawbreaking as a disruptive form of action’ (Della Porta 1995: 37).

In the late 1960s, the movement experienced an increasing fragmentation and polarisation. Many former members gave up on politics in the conventional sense or supported the newly elected government led by the first Social Democratic Chancellor Willy Brandt. Others became involved in the emerging women’s movement, citizens’ initiatives and a variety of small leftist networks and splinter groups (ibid.: 38-40). According to a report by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution [Bundesverfassungsschutz], by the end of 1970, there were more than 250 radical leftist groups in the country.11 While most of these groups were orthodox communists, there were also a

few Maoist, Trotskyite and anarchist organisations. ‘In addition, the
counterculture had begun to spread and diversify itself throughout the
country, creating numerous communes and subcultural scenes, out of
which a movement based on spontaneous political action (Sponti-
Bewegung\textsuperscript{12}) emerged, with one centre in Frankfurt’ (Klimke and

Discussions about violence within and among the many small
leftist groups intensified in the late 1960s as a response to police
repression during demonstrations and to polemical attacks against the
New Left and the student movement in the media.\textsuperscript{13} A first event that
fuelled these discussions was the killing of the student Benno Ohnesorg
by a police officer during a demonstration on 2 June 1967 (Fahlenbrach
Ohnesorg lying on the street, with his head bleeding and a helpless
woman in an elegant fur coat leaning over him’, highlights Martin Klimke,
‘was to become one of the most iconic images of the German student
movement and the 1960s in West Germany’ (Klimke and Scharloth 2008:
97).\textsuperscript{14} Many felt that the bullets that killed Ohnesorg were directed against
the entire student and protest movement. Some were convinced that only

\textsuperscript{12} The Sponti-scene was a proliferation of small autonomous collectives that emerged in
West Germany in the early 1970s. Like the Italian autonomia, ‘they wanted to organize a
total, anti-Capitalist – and militant – struggle, against the complete domination of
capital over the sphere of production and reproduction. Their political mobilizations
outside the factory, including rent strikes and house squattings, expressed their rejection
of the domination of capitalism well beyond the sphere of production as well’ (Della

\textsuperscript{13} While a great part of the media in West-Germany was anti-communist, Varon rightly
points to the crucial role that Axel Springer’s conservative newspapers played in viewing
the New Left as a ‘red menace’. Springer’s tabloids were particularly influential in West
Berlin, where they accounted for more than 70\% of the press (Varon 2004: 38).

\textsuperscript{14} While Klimke is right to point out that the Ohnesorg killing was a central moment in
the West German protest movement, his description of the photograph here reinforces
the gendered stereotype that women were more interested in fashion than in politics and
played a largely passive role in the 68 movement.
violence could prevent further attacks. The fact that the founding members of one of the groups in the centre of this study decided to call themselves ‘Movement of June the Second’ indicates the importance that they attributed to the Ohnesorg killing (for a closer discussion of the group and its name, see Chapter 3).

A second dramatic and agitational event followed just months after the Ohnsorg killing, the attempted assassination of the student leader Rudi Dutschke in spring 1968 (Della Porta 1995: 37). On the night after Dutschke’s assassination, a mixed crowd of students and groups associated with the Berlin Underground scene\textsuperscript{15} tried to stop the delivery of the tabloid BILD and other newspapers published by the Axel Springer group, which had crudely misrepresented the Ohnesorg killing and repeatedly stirred resentment toward Rudi Dutschke, the student movement and the New Left. In November 1968, Horst Mahler stood trial for playing a leading role in this protest. Outside the court, a group of about 1000 protesters clashed with police forces. In what became known as ‘Schlacht am Tegeler Weg’ [Battle of Tegeler Weg], the conflict between members of youth subcultures in Berlin and the police reached a new intensity: dozens of protesters and hundreds of police officers were injured, some of them seriously (Kraushaar 2006b: 527). While the attacks on Ohnesorg and Dutschke and the repeated clashes with police acted as a deterrent from violent forms of protest for some in the Berlin movements, they fuelled the militancy of a few.

\textsuperscript{15}The ‘Berlin Underground’ is a name given to the alternative intellectual and youth subcultural scene in Berlin during the 1960s and 70s. It is discussed further in Chapter 3.
Christian Semler, a journalist and leading APO-activist in the 1960s, emphasises that the APO never adopted a unified stance towards violence (Semler 2007: 3). He acknowledges, however, that the Ohnesorg killing and other events in the 1960s undoubtedly increased the acceptance of violent forms of resistance in the New Left in West Germany. According to Della Porta, ‘the student movement’s attitude toward violence evolved from one of refusal, to the acceptance of spontaneous forms of self-defence, which sporadically became more organised’ (Della Porta 1995: 38). In the late 1960s, many students and other leftist activists distinguished between two different forms of violent behaviour: damage to or destruction of property, and violence against people (Kätzel 2005: 233).

Whilst opposed to behaviour that could harm or kill people, an increasing number of those in the radical Left considered property destruction a tolerable or even necessary form of political activism. A rapidly growing number of more or less organised attacks mainly against courts, police departments and US institutions between 1969 and 1970 by militant leftist groups and individuals reflect this development. According to a report by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the number of arsons and bombings for ‘political or allegedly political reasons’ grew significantly within a few months: It rose from 48 in 1969 to 117 in 1970.16

Berlin had been the centre of the student and protest movement in the 1960s, and it became the hotbed of militant leftist violence in the late

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1960s and early 1970s. As the student movement was on the decline, a less political and more hedonistic subculture emerged in West Berlin (Kraushaar 2006b: 514). Against the social background of Berlin’s quickly growing drug scene, a number of small militant networks such as the ‘Palestine Faction’ [Palästina Fraktion], the ‘Black Rats’ [Schwarze Ratten], the ‘Central Council of the Roaming Hash Rebels’ [Zentralrat der umherschweifenden Haschrebellen] and the Tupamaros West Berlin (TW) developed. Most of these networks had very short life spans and were composed of similar if not the same circles of friends and acquaintances. The members of these groups bought, took and sold drugs in particular places and bars in Berlin, where they frequently clashed with the police. As Klaus Weinhauer highlights, this recourse to violence was mostly spontaneous and defensive (Weinhauer et al. 2006: 225). Some of the actors involved, however, radicalised further and turned to more organised forms of violence.

The Tupamaros West Berlin were the first self-declared urban guerrilla group in West Germany (Kraushaar 2006b: 526). In February 1969, more than a year before the RAF committed its first attack, members of the TW made plans to kill US-president Richard Nixon during a visit to West Berlin (Wunschik 2006: 542-543). On 9 November in the same year, they planted a bomb in a Jewish community centre. Both bombings failed, probably due to dysfunctional explosive devices provided by the agent provocateur Peter Urbach (König 2006: 441-442, Wunschik 2006: 544). Like other attacks by militant leftist groups in the late 1960s, these two actions did not claim any lives; but they illustrate that some factions in the radical Left no longer shied away from violence.
against people and that the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ were neither the first nor the only militant leftist groups who took up arms in this period.

Whilst distancing itself emphatically from the anti-Semitism of the Third Reich, the TW carried out an attack against a Jewish community centre on the anniversary of the Jewish pogrom in 1938. In the same night, the group painted pro-Palestinian slogans on Jewish memorials in Berlin. Apparently, the attackers felt no need to pay attention to the enormous complexity of questions of anti-Semitism in the German context. In the claim of responsibility, they called for an end to the ‘neurotic-historicist process of coming to terms with the past’\textsuperscript{17} and for ‘true anti-Fascism’, by which they meant ‘clear and simple solidarity with the fighting Fedayeen’\textsuperscript{18} (Kraushaar 2005: 48). The members of the TW considered their politics not anti-Semitic but anti-Fascist and anti-Zionist.

A growing number of people in the radical Left including most founding members of the RAF, MJ2 and RC saw anti-Zionism in the late 1960s as a political imperative (ibid.: 74). Among other factors, the Six-Day War in June 1967 fuelled anti-Zionist tendencies in the New Left. ‘The Six-Day War [...] and its portrayal in the German media’, writes Volker Weiss, ‘caused a break between the “old” and “new” Left with regard to the attitude towards Israel’\textsuperscript{19} (Weiss 2005: 223). Whilst critical of Israel’s war efforts and news coverage in the West German media,

\textsuperscript{17} ‘Die neurotisch-historizistische Aufarbeitung’
\textsuperscript{18} ‘Der wahre Antifaschismus ist die klare und einfache Solidarisierung mit den kämpfenden Fedayeen’. Fedayeen, literally ‘those who sacrifice’, is an Arabic word for militants, commonly used for Palestinian fighters in this period.
\textsuperscript{19} ‘Anlässlich des Sechstagekriegs im Jahre 1967 und dessen Rezeption in den deutschen Medien kam es hinsichtlich der Haltung gegenüber Israel zum Bruch zwischen ‘alter’ und ‘neuer’ Linker’
groups and individuals associated with the ‘old’ Left emphasised a need for solidarity with Jewish people in Israel and in other parts of the world. Many people in the New Left, by contrast, considered Israel a fascist state. More than a few strongly supported Palestinian fighters and had personal contacts with leaders of the ‘Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine’ (PFLP).

Drawing on some of these contacts, the first generation of the RAF and the MJ2 learnt to use weapons in Palestinian military camps in the Middle East. As part of the RAF Ulrike Meinhof, who had called for solidarity with the Jewish people in the 1960s, openly supported fatal attacks such as the kidnapping and murder of Israeli athletes during the 1972 Olympic Games in the FRG by the militant Palestinian group ‘Black September’. On several occasions, members of the RAF and RC carried out joint attacks with the PFLP and other militant groups in the Middle East and the RC attacked several Israeli institutions and companies in the FRG. Unlike the TW, none of the groups in this study carried out attacks against Jewish community or faith institutions. However, with the exception of the Red Zora, all were involved in attacks that many commentators have presented as anti-Semitic (Kraushaar 2005, Weiss 2005). Although the question of anti-Semitism is not central to this study, I will return to it in the following chapters when looking at specific attacks.

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20 In the statement ‘Die Aktion des “Schwarzen September” in München’ from November 1972, the RAF openly supports the fatal attack in Munich and claims that it was ‘antiimperialist, antifascist and internationalist’ [‘antiimperialistisch, antifaschistisch und internationalistisch’] (RAF 1997: 151).
1.1.2 The New Women’s Movement

By no means all women in the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ were feminists or identified with the aims and principles of the New Women’s Movement. On the contrary, in line with previous publications (see, e.g. Paczensky 1978, Vukadinović 2004, 2010, Bandhauer-Schöffmann 2009) this study finds that most women in the RAF and the MJ2 had little appreciation for feminist ideas and politics. And yet, like the student movement of the 1960s, the New Women’s Movement in West Germany was of vital importance to the development of the militant leftist groups in this study.

Firstly, the New Women’s Movement emerged in the same historical, social and political context as the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ. Its roots can also be traced back to the student movement, and it shared a number of theoretical influences, guiding principles and common aims with the four groups. The actors involved were fundamentally opposed to the existing political structures and aimed to create a society based on anti-authoritarian, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist principles.

But most groups and individuals associated with the New Women’s Movement took a profoundly different approach to violence. While the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ believed that new social conditions had to be created and defended by means of violence, most individuals and groups in the New Women’s Movement strove for a non-violent revolution in everyday life.

Secondly, several members of the groups in the centre of this study were involved in or influenced by the New Women’s Movement before taking up arms. Ulrike Meinhof, for instance, had gained a reputation as
‘one of the first politically-minded campaigners for women’s rights’\(^{21}\) in the student and protest movement before she became a founding member of the RAF (Seifert 2006: 365). Whilst praising Meinhof’s feminist stance, Seifert’s statement also illustrates that he had a fairly narrow definition of politics. One of my informants pointed out that the New Women’s Movement had a strong impact on women in the radical Left in Frankfurt in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Apparently, this also holds for women who were not regularly involved with feminist groups, such as RC co-founder Brigitte Kuhlmann.\(^{22}\) Magdalena Kopp, like Kuhlmann an early member of the RC, was a member of the ‘Crones Committee’ [Weiberrat], one of the first feminist groups that emerged in Frankfurt in the context of the New Left (Kopp 2007: 57).

A third reason why the New Women’s Movement is of great importance for this study is that women in two of the four groups discussed in this study actively incorporated its ideas and principles. Chapters 4 and 5 illustrate that the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ and the Red Zora identified as feminists, and adopted central topics and aims of the New Women’s Movement. As we shall see, feminist reactions to attacks by these groups ranged from sharp criticism to open support. The RZ is the only group in this study that was based on radical feminist principles. Members of the group stated explicitly that they identified not only as a part of the militant Left but also of the women’s movement. For this reason, we cannot discuss the politics of the RZ without relating it to the wider politics of the New Women’s Movement.

\(^{21}\) ‘eine der ersten politisch denkenden Frauenrechtlerinnen’
\(^{22}\) Source: Female interviewee in e-mail to the author, 27 December 2012.
Since the 1840s, German women had fought – primarily but not exclusively with non-violent means – against patriarchal structures and discriminatory laws. Feminist historians trace the German Women’s Movement back to the period of the ‘Vormärz’ [pre-March] that led to the March revolution in 1848. During the revolution, thousands of women organised in democratic groups to support fighters and their families (Frevert 1986: 74). A few women, however ‘did not want to leave it at listening, supporting and petitioning. They helped to build barricades and fought alongside the democratic insurgents against the military’23 (ibid.). Between the 1840s and the 1940s, the different living conditions of proletarian and bourgeois women, fundamental political changes, and not least the two world wars had a crucial impact on the feminist movement in Germany. The development of the German Women’s Movement was, as Ute Gerhard highlights, no ‘continuous process’, but ‘a history of repeated setbacks, stagnation and of many new beginnings under constantly changing social and political circumstances’24 (Gerhard 2008: 191). The term ‘New Women’s Movement’ indicates that the feminist groups and networks that emerged in the late 1960s in the context of the anti-authoritarian student movement marked such a new beginning.

Inspired by the theoretical framework and anti-authoritarian spirit of the New Left, the New Women’s Movement developed structures and a political agenda that differed considerably from those of feminist movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Silies 2011: 94).

23 ‘Einige wenige Frauen gaben sich mit Zuhören, Unterstützen und Petitionieren nicht zufrieden, sondern halfen beim Barrikadenbau und kämpften auf der Seite der demokratischen Freischaren gegen das Militär’
24 ‘eine Geschichte wiederholter Rückschläge, Stillstände und vieler mühsamer Neuanfänge unter immer wieder veränderten gesellschaftlichen und politischen Bedingungen’
'In contrast to the historical women’s movement, the new one founded no associations or organisations, and had no leaders, but was rather composed of a loose network of groups and broader networks, projects and organised meetings which informed the public about specific issues, thereby contributing to the mobilisation and spread of the movement’. (Gerhard 2002: 328-329)

Since the women involved sought to achieve ‘self-determination for the individual as well as institutional freedom from established forms of politics’, the New Women’s Movement is also sometimes referred to as the ‘autonomous women’s movement’ [autonome Frauenbewegung] (ibid.: 329, Silies 2011: 94).

While the New Women’s Movement criticised patriarchal structures and gendered hierarchies in the New Left and in society at large, its orientation was, at least initially, neither separatist nor countercultural.25 There is no official founding moment for the New Women’s Movement, but one incident during the 23rd SDS conference in Frankfurt am Main on 12 September 1968 played a significant role in its formation (see, e.g. Schlaeger and Vedder-Shults 1978, Altbach 1984, Bendkowski 1999, Schulz 2002, Notz 2006, Hertrampf 2008, Gerhard 2008, Lenz 2010). On that day, the feminist filmmaker Helke Sander, spokeswoman of the ‘Action Council for the Liberation of Women’ [Aktionskreis zur Befreiung der Frau] gave a speech in which she criticised patriarchal structures in the SDS and called for a joint effort to tackle the oppression of women (cf. Sander 1999). When it appeared that

25 Following Sabine von Dirke, I understand countercultures in this context as cultures that ‘position themselves explicitly and fundamentally against their dominant counterpart and try to develop an alternative way of life. They challenge the hegemonic culture with a holistic approach, negating all of its values and traditions and struggling for radical and comprehensive change’ (1997: 4).
the SDS board members wanted to move on to other issues without commenting on Sander’s speech, Sigrid Rüger – also a member of the Action Council – threw tomatoes at them.

Rüger, Sander and other women in the Action Council were active members of the SDS and committed to the anti-authoritarian politics of the New Left. In January 1968, they organised the Action Council as women seeking to develop ideas on how to translate these politics into their daily lives, as many of them still carried the sole responsibility for housework and childcare (Notz 2004: 132). With the tomato throwing at the SDS conference, Rüger expressed her frustration over the fact that her male comrades simply ignored Sander’s critical contribution. A few weeks after the incident, Ulrike Meinhof commented on the event in the leftist magazine konkret as follows: ‘the woman who threw the tomatoes and those who provided the explanatory statement for this act did not speak on the grounds of borrowed, abstract experiences; by speaking on behalf of many women, they spoke and acted for themselves’ (Meinhof 1968). While they might not have been aware of it at the time, Sander’s speech, Rüger’s unconventional protest and Meinhof’s analysis got to the heart of the New Women’s Movement and one of its key principles: ‘The personal is political’.

Inspired by the Berlin Action Council, women in other university cities formed similar groups (Schulz 2008). Like West Berlin, Frankfurt am Main had been a hotbed of student protest and became an early centre of the New Women’s Movement. Two months after the tomato throwing,

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26 ‘die Frau, die die Tomaten warf, und die, die die Begründung dazu geliefert hatten, die redeten nicht aufgrund entlehnter, mühsam vermittelter Erfahrung, die sprachen und handelten, indem sie für unzählige Frauen sprachen, für sich selbst’
a women’s group from Frankfurt caused a scandal at the 24th SDS conference in Hannover. They distributed a flyer with the title ‘statement of accounts’ that showed a naked woman wearing a witch’s hat and holding an axe (see Image 1). Behind her, six ‘trophies’ – severed penises that were linked to the names of leading SDS members – were hanging on the wall. The women who distributed the flyer demanded: ‘Liberate the socialist eminences from their bourgeois cocks’27 (Kätzel 2002: 14). The feminist protest at the SDS conferences in Berlin and in Hannover provided a foretaste of the creative, symbolic and provocative campaigns of groups in the New Women’s Movement. These included street theatre, paint attacks, ‘walk-ins’, ‘die-ins’, jelly and other ‘food bombs’, and (illegal) bus trips to abortion clinics in the Netherlands (Frevert 1986: 280, Silies 2011: 91). Chapter 5 shows that the tactics of the Red Zora were clearly influenced by this colourful protest.

27 ‘Befreit die sozialistischen Eminenzen von ihren bürgerlichen Schwänzen!’

Image 1: Flyer by a Women’s Group in the SDS, November 1968.

Starting from Berlin and Frankfurt, the New Women’s Movement spread quickly through the country. In her personal history of the Women’s Movement in West Germany, the feminist activist and historian Frigga Haug notes that in the 1970s ‘there was no town, indeed almost no village, without a women’s group, no district that was not affected. It was like a bush fire’ (Haug 1986: 59). One of the first feminist projects in West Berlin were ‘storefront28 day care centres’ [Kinderläden], where parents tried to raise children collectively and in an anti-authoritarian manner (Lord and Watkins 1973, Zipes 1973). Soon, feminist groups also worked on a range of other topics including Marxist theory, health care and sexuality, reproductive rights, and violence against women. In addition to the theories and politics of the New Left, the emerging New Women’s Movement in West Germany found inspiration in feminist campaigns and debates in other Western countries, especially in France and in the US (Gerhard 2008: 199).

To underline the variety of topics, political views and forms of organisation in feminist circles, Gisela Notz does not refer to the New Women’s Movement but to ‘the autonomous women’s movements of the 1970s’ (Notz 2004, 2006). Notz identifies three different strands in the thriving women’s movement(s) in the 1970s. Firstly, ‘liberal and “moderate” feminists’ who focused on issues of gender equality (Notz 2004: 133). Gender equality in this context means that women demanded the same rights and entitlements as men. Secondly, ‘radical autonomous feminists who considered patriarchal gender oppression to be the

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28 As Gisela Notz highlights these anti-authoritarian child care centres were often organised in vacant shops (Notz 2004: 143).
fundamental structural category of modern societies, and whose prime aim was therefore the abolition of patriarchy’\textsuperscript{29} (ibid.). Thirdly, ‘socialist or leftist feminists’ who sought to achieve ‘a fundamental transformation of capitalist and patriarchal structures’\textsuperscript{30} (ibid.). Chapter 4 illustrates that there were not only different feminist positions in the women’s movement but also in the militant Left. To account for this diversity, this thesis works with a definition of feminism that does not reduce this dynamic and diverse movement to the position of liberal feminists.

Following the feminist theorist bell hooks, I understand feminism in the context of this thesis as a joint ‘struggle to end sexist oppression’ (hooks 2000: 28). Hooks rejects definitions that present feminism as ‘a movement that aims to make women the social equals of men’, as these limit feminism to the position of liberal feminists and do not address differences amongst women, and amongst men\textsuperscript{31} (hooks 2000: 18-19). To overcome these limitations, she suggests a broad characterisation of feminism as a ‘political movement that aims to have a radical transformational impact on society’ (ibid.: 30). According to hooks, feminism must be a ‘revolutionary struggle’ that tackles not only sexism but also imperialism, racism and capitalism (ibid.). Although many women in militant leftist groups in the 1970s would not have agreed with

\textsuperscript{29} ‘radikal autonome Feministinnen, die die patriarchale Geschlechterunterdrückung als grundlegende Strukturkategorie moderner Gesellschaften ansahen, und daher die Abschaffung des Patriarchats als oberstes Ziel verfolgten’

\textsuperscript{30} ‘sozialistische oder linke Feministinnen, die eine grundlegende Transformation der kapitalistischen und patriarchal Verhältnisse anstrebten’

\textsuperscript{31} In her critical discussion of liberal feminism, bell hooks argues that a focus on equality between men and women fails to consider race, class and other differences among women and among men. ‘Since men are not equals in white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal class structure’, asks hooks provocatively, ‘which men do women want to be equal to?’ (hooks 2000: 19).
this understanding of feminism, I hope to show that it is a useful working definition to analyse their armed struggle.

One of the first central topics in the New Women’s Movement in West Germany was abortion. Like their feminist ‘sisters’ in the US, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy, women’s groups in the FRG fought in the early 1970s for a decriminalisation of abortion. According to paragraph 218 of the Criminal Code of the Federal Republic of Germany, abortion was a punishable act that could lead to a year long prison sentence for the actors involved (Schulz 2002: 143). Inspired by a similar project in France, the journalist Alice Schwarzer put the topic of abortion on the public agenda in West Germany with a provocative media campaign. In June 1971, she published a manifesto against the ban on abortions signed by 374 German women in the magazine Stern. The signatories – among them housewives, academics, actresses and workers – openly admitted that they had had an abortion. ‘As was the case in France’, highlights Kristina Schulz, ‘the self-denunciation of German women shocked the broader public and scandalized representatives of the church, the traditional medical profession’s associations, and the conservative political parties’ (Schulz 2004: 140).

According to Schulz, the hostile responses to Schwarzer’s campaign and the criminal investigations against the women involved had a positive effect on the Women’s movement in West Germany for two reasons. Firstly, they raised awareness of reproductive rights and other women’s issues and led to a wave of sympathy and solidarity within the population (see also Frevert 1986: 279). Secondly, ‘the various groups demanding free abortion moved closer together and intensified communication and
organization’ (Schulz 2004: 140). In the following years, this social network proved vital not only for the mass mobilisation against paragraph 218 but also for the organisation of a range of other campaigns. Inspired by the leftist protest culture in the late 1960s, these campaigns drew on creative, sometimes spectacular forms of protest: ‘Women interrupted beauty contests, bricked up sex shops, organised go-ins into churches and Medical Association conferences, they organised paragraph 218 tribunals and brought attention to the many forms of male violence’32 (Frevert 1986: 280).

While the broad campaign against paragraph 218 strengthened the solidarity and cooperation among women in West Germany, it did not achieve ‘the aim of free and legalized abortion’ (Schulz 2004: 138). In 1974, the social-democratic/liberal coalition passed legislation that decriminalised all abortions during the first trimester of pregnancy, the so-called ‘time-phase solution’ [Fristenlösung]. Church representatives and conservative politicians condemned the reform, which constituted in their eyes a legalisation of murder (Frevert 1986: 279). Immediately after the parliamentary vote, members of the Christian Democratic Party appealed against the reform in the Federal Court of Justice. The judges in Karlsruhe found the reform incompatible with the sanctity of human life as defined by the constitution (Helwig 1997). On February 25, 1975, the Federal Court of Justice declared the reform void. The ruling was a hard blow to all women who had campaigned for years to achieve a decriminalisation of abortion. ‘The women’s movement’, concludes

32 ‘Frauen sprengten Miß-Wahlen, mauerten Sex-Shops zu, veranstalteten Go-Ins in Kirchen und Ärzte-Bundkonferenzen, organisierten §-218-Tribunale und wiesen auf die vielfältigen Formen männlicher Gewalt hin’
Ricarda Strobel, ‘lost an important battle, which had previously united its different wings’\textsuperscript{33} (Strobel 2004: 263). Chapters 4 and 5 show that feminists in the RC and in the RZ did not want to accept defeat and carried out several attacks to protest against the continued abortion ban.

Three forms of violence were of great importance to feminist groups in the 1970s. They deserve closer attention in this chapter, because they were constitutive for the relationship between the New Women’s Movement and women in militant leftist groups: 1) violence against women, 2) state violence and repression, and 3) ‘counter-violence’ (as propagated by the Red Zora and other militant feminists). Across the board, feminists in West Germany condemned gender-based violence, including rape, sexual assault, beatings and other prohibited and tolerated forms of violence against women. In the second half of the 1970s, violence against women became a central topic in feminist circles in Germany and other Western countries. In April 1976, the Russell Tribunal in Brussels provided a platform for 2000 feminists from 40 countries to discuss different forms of violence against women (Zellmer 2011: 228). Upon their return, German participants published their findings and created a national tribunal on gender-based violence (for a detailed discussion, see: Frauenzentrum 1976). In the following years, a range of feminist publications dealt with violence against women and possible ways of tackling the problem (see, e.g. Fischer et al. 1977, Boettcher 1978, Notruf und Beratung für vergewaltigte Frauen 1979). And feminists in West Germany did not leave it at theoretical debates. In the

\textsuperscript{33} ‘Die Frauenbewegung hatte einen wichtigen Kampf, in dem sich ihre verschiedenen Flügel vereinten verloren’
late 1970s, they created a network of resources and facilities for victims of domestic violence ranging from phone hotlines to advice centres and women’s shelters (Notz 2004: 138-139).

State violence and repression constituted a second focus in the feminist debate on violence in the 1970s. The year 1978 saw two feminist conferences on violence – one on violence against women in Cologne (cf. Sibylle Plogstedt 1978), and one entitled ‘the women’s movement and repression’ in Frankfurt (cf. Bührmann 1978, Sybille Plogstedt 1978). Repression, in the context of this discussion, can be understood as ‘the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of [...] deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions’ (Davenport 2007: 2). In the spirit of the New Left, women in the New Women’s Movement questioned the authority of the state and took a critical stance against the way in which state authorities responded to the threat posed by the RAF and other militant leftist groups. Unlike socialist and radical feminists, liberal and moderate feminists were not fundamentally opposed to the West German state. Yet they, too, criticised the state for curtailing the rights of alleged members and sympathisers of militant leftist groups.

Contrary to feminists in the militant Left, most groups and individuals in the New Women’s Movement considered violence to be neither a legitimate nor a necessary response to repression and other forms of violence (Bandhauer-Schöffmann 2009: 84). In response to the escalating violence in the 1970s, a growing number of feminists publicly
voiced this view. In October 1977, the feminist magazine *Courage* published the ‘appeal to all women for the invention of happiness’ by a group of women in Frankfurt. The authors of the short manifesto demanded release ‘from the nation that created nothing but misery’. They claimed ‘the fundamental right to laugh’ and ‘to invent happiness without being obstructed by murder and manslaughter, arrest and detention, raids and agitation’34 (‘Aufruf an alle Frauen zur Erfindung des Glücks’ 1977). With a suggestion of irony, the women noted that they had to declare some ‘great truths’: ‘you cannot shoot power, you cannot shoot countervailing power, you can only shoot people’35 (ibid.). The message was simple: violence is always destructive and will not help to create a better world.

In their pursuit of happiness, many feminists distanced themselves not only from the state and the militant Left but also from all politics in the conventional sense. In line with the feminist principle that ‘the personal is political’, feminists in West Germany focused their efforts in the second half of the 1970s increasingly on their own lives and immediate environments. Some parts of the New Women’s Movement and groups in the radical Left criticised this development as a retreat into the private sphere [‘Rückzug nach innen’] (Gerhard 2008: 204). With this development, the gap between feminists in militant leftist groups and most groups and individuals in the women’s movement grew further. As we shall see, feminists in the RC and in the RZ repeatedly tried to build

34 ‘Wir nehmen uns das elementare Recht, in der Erfindung des Glücks nicht dauernd durch Mord und Totschlag, Gefangennahme und Gefängnis, Fahndung und Hetze behindert zu werden.’


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bridges to the New Women’s Movement, even if these attempts were appreciated only in small parts of the movement.

1.2 The Armed Struggle of the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ – a Brief Overview

This section draws on previous research on political violence in West Germany to introduce the four groups in the centre of this study. As mentioned in the introduction, the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ had a number of things in common. Firstly, women constituted a significant part of their membership. Secondly, female group members played a range of roles from carrying messages to taking leading positions. Thirdly, all groups were fundamentally opposed to the West German state and adopted violent means to work towards a different political order. Legal authorities and state representatives took up this challenge and responded to the perceived threat with large-scale police operations and a number of restrictive regulations. Following the introduction of paragraph 129a of the Criminal Code in 1976, the Ministry of Interior classified the RAF, MJ2, RC -- and later the RZ -- as ‘terrorist organisations’. Since structural, tactical and ideological differences between the four groups are equally important for a better understanding of female participation in political violence, they, too, will be addressed in this overview.

36 Laws banning entry to civil service professions on political grounds from 1972, legislation restricting the role of defence lawyers, and Article 88a and Article 129a on membership and support of ‘terrorist organisations’ from 1976 constitute some examples of the ‘anti-terrorism’ laws that the German state introduced in the 1970s.

37 While a large part of the German media used the same terminology to refer to the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ, the following section shows that at least some of the four groups do not have to be understood as terrorist organisations.
In 1977, political violence in West Germany reached a peak that became known as the ‘German Autumn’. To develop a better understanding of the social background and motives of those carrying out acts of political violence, the Federal Minister of the Interior mandated an ambitious research project. Based on biographical data of 250 persons who were associated with militant leftist or rightist groups, an interdisciplinary team of researchers analysed the causes and the effects of the armed struggle in West Germany. The 250 people in the centre of the study were men and women against whom the West German police had issued an arrest warrant for support or membership in a terrorist organisation before January 1979. Of this sample, 219 people were associated with the RAF or MJ2, eight were members of the RC, and the remaining 23 were part of militant rightist groups.

Among other aspects, the researchers collected data on gender relations in these organisations. According to Gerhard Schmidtchen’s evaluation of the biographical data of the 250 people, all members of right-wing groups were male, while 33% of the members of militant leftist groups were women (Schmidtchen 1981: 23). The data indicates that 34% of the members the RAF were female and that women constituted 39% of the RC and MJ2 (ibid: 24). A recent study indicates that the percentage of women in the RAF and MJ2 was significantly higher than Schmidtchen’s survey suggests. Based on an analysis of wanted posters and Interpol alerts, the historian Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann concludes that women

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38 The ‘German Autumn’ [Deutscher Herbst] refers to a dramatic peak in the escalating conflict between the Red Army Faction and the West German state. It began with the abduction of the business executive Hanns-Martin Schleyer in September 1977 and ended with the death of the detained RAF founder members in October of the same year. The following chapter discusses these and other events in the history of the RAF.
constituted 48% of RAF and MJ2 members (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 275). Given the small sample of RC-members in Schmidtchen’s study, his estimation does not necessarily draw a realistic picture of female participation in this group. While we still lack empirical evidence to draw clear conclusions about the proportion of women in the RC, the data collected for this study indicates that it was probably as high as in the RAF and MJ2 if not higher (for a detailed discussion, see Chapter 4). Neither Schmidtchen nor Diewald-Kerkmann considers the Red Zora, which consisted exclusively of female members.39

Drawing on the same data sample as Schmidtchen, Lieselotte Süllwold discusses the social background and motives of women who joined or supported militant leftist groups. According to Süllwold, female participation in militant leftist groups coincided with a rise in numbers of female students at West German universities; radical leftist views were as common among female students as they were among the male student population. She acknowledges that, in sharp contrast to universities and other public institutions in West Germany, women played leading roles in militant leftist organisations (Süllwold 1981: 106). However, Süllwold emphasises that women’s active participation in political violence by no means implies an individual or collective process of emancipation. On the contrary, she argues that the ‘overzealous conformity’ and ‘cold perfectionism’ of women in the RAF and other militant groups were indicative of a complete disavowal of the emancipation of women (ibid:

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39 The main reason for the absence of the Red Zora in the survey is probably that the police issued the first arrest warrants against alleged members of the group in 1987. Moreover, at the time when the data for the survey were collected, the RZ was still operating as a subgroup of the RC.
Overall, the biographies and motives of female members of the RAF, MJ2 and RC were, according to Süllwold, hardly different from those of their male counterparts. As we shall see, her analysis fails to account for a number of ideological, organisational and tactical differences between and within these groups.

Up to now, public debates about political violence in West Germany have dealt almost exclusively with the Red Army Faction. In particular, the founding members of the group, who died in prison more than 30 years ago, still attract great attention in the media and in popular culture (Weinhauer 2004: 224). A large part of the scholarly literature on political violence in Germany also focuses on the RAF. Wolfgang Kraushaar, the editor of one of the most comprehensive studies of the group, describes the RAF as ‘the greatest challenge in the history of West Germany’⁴⁰ (Kraushaar 2008: 12). According to Kraushaar, no other group pursued the downfall of the existing political order in West Germany as resolutely as the RAF. The comparative analysis in the following paragraphs confirms Kraushaar’s conclusion. No other militant leftist group was responsible for the death of so many persons or fought against the state for as long as the RAF. However, this overview also shows that it is wrong to reduce the armed struggle in West Germany to the RAF. While an array of journalistic and scholarly publications deal with the history of the group or specific aspects of it⁴¹, few analyse its intricate relation to other militant leftist organisations in West Germany, and there is literally no research whatsoever about the RZ and other

⁴⁰ ‘die größte Herausforderung in der Geschichte der alten Bundesrepublik’
⁴¹ There are too many studies of the RAF to discuss them here in detail, but the next chapter provides an overview of the existing body of literature.
militant groups that did not have the same media presence as the RAF and MJ2.

While the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ committed their first attacks in the 1970s, all but one can be traced back to the student and protest movement in the 1960s.\(^{42}\) The radicalisation of the members of the four groups, in other words, did not happen overnight. In fact, there is evidence that most men and women who joined these militant organisations engaged in a variety of other non-violent and violent forms of protest before taking up arms.\(^{43}\) Gerd Langguth points out that it is difficult to specify when exactly the RAF, the MJ2 and the RC were founded, and a similar conclusion can be drawn about the RZ (Langguth 1983). Furthermore, not all groups unanimously declared the end of their armed struggle. Due to the recent nature of the armed struggle in West Germany, it is at this point hardly possible to offer a comprehensive history of events, and this study does not attempt to do so. Rather, it seeks to draw on and add to the existing literature on the armed struggle in West Germany by providing a qualitative analysis of female participation in the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ and in concrete manifestations of political violence.

Based on data collected by the Ministry of the Interior in West Germany from 1968 until 1980, Friedhelm Neidhardt (1982: 437) has estimated the total number of attacks by militant leftist groups in this

\(^{42}\) As the founding members of the RZ are not known by name, it is not possible to make any definitive statements about their political background.

\(^{43}\) Schmidtchen's study indicates that the proportion of men and women who had previously engaged in 'unconventional political activities' was significantly higher in militant leftist groups than among other young people at the time. According to Schmidtchen, 63% in his sample had been involved in clashes with the police, 57% had participated in legal or illegal demonstrations and 17% had squatted houses before they joined the RAF, MJ2 or RC (1981: 46-47).
period (see Table 1). Attacks by the RZ are not listed, because the group operated as a part of the RC until 1984. The table reveals that there were significant differences between the three groups. While most attacks by the RAF were directed against people, most attacks by militant leftist splinter groups and more than 90% of the attacks by the RC were directed against property. Since the MJ2 and RAF operated underground, they had to spend a considerable part of their energies on the infrastructure that a life in illegality required. For this reason, both groups committed dozens of attacks that are listed as ‘Other’. These ranged from bank robberies to theft of identity papers, weapons and other objects. Members of the RC and RZ, by contrast, avoided going underground. Consequently, they had to spend less money and energy on their infrastructure.

Table 1: Attacks by Militant Leftist Groups in the FRG 1968-80.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Attacks Against People</th>
<th>Attacks Against Property</th>
<th>Other (Robbery, Theft, etc.)</th>
<th>Attacks in Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJ2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Splinter Groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the Tupamaros West Berlin formed the first militant leftist group in the FRG, the RAF was the first one to execute an armed attack. In May 1970, a group of several women and one man liberated Andreas Baader by force of arms from prison in West Berlin – an event that former group
members and researchers refer to as the birth of the RAF.\textsuperscript{44} In April 1998, the RAF declared the end of its armed struggle. The last attack by the group, however, took place five years earlier, when members of the so-called third generation of the RAF planted a bomb in a newly built prison. The bomb destroyed the building entirely but, unlike many previous attacks, did not claim any victims. Among militant leftist organisations in West Germany, the RAF pursued by far the most brutal strategy. It alone committed the majority of political assassinations and other attacks against persons in West Germany (Della Porta 1995: 125).

As the name ‘Red Army Faction’ indicates, the founding members of the group wanted to form the military wing of a not-yet existing communist party (Kraushaar 2006a: 55). The discussion in the following chapter shows that the RAF understood itself as an avant-garde expediting a revolution, which it expected to be carried out by the working class and other oppressed groups all over the globe. Due to their ideology and theoretical background, the founding members of the RAF quickly earned the reputation of ‘Leninists with guns’ (Schildt 2009: 384). While identifying with the marginalised and oppressed, most group members came from relatively privileged backgrounds. For the greater part, members of the RAF originated in the upper middle class and were actual or former university students (Schmidtchen 1981: 21, 24). This applies in particular to female group members. According to Schmidtchen’s survey, 60% of the women in militant leftist groups came from wealthy

\textsuperscript{44} The case study in the following chapter offers a detailed account of this constitutive event.
backgrounds, while this counts only for 39% of their male counterparts (ibid.: 21).

After the liberation of Andreas Baader, the police started a thorough search for the actors involved, which increased the pressure on the whole Left in West Berlin. In December 1971, Georg von Rauch, one of the leading figures of the TW, was killed in a shootout with plainclothes officers. In January 1972, some of the remaining TW and several other small militant leftist groups founded the MJ2. As mentioned previously, they chose the name ‘Movement of June Second’ to commemorate the killing of the student Benno Ohnesorg during a demonstration in West Berlin in 1967. The founding members of the MJ2 rejected the avantgardist position of the RAF. They identified with the ‘lumpenproletariat’ (Baumann 1980: 56) and hoped to mobilise revolutionary forces in the working class by adopting a more populist line than the RAF. While not all members of the MJ2 came from working class backgrounds, there is evidence that most were younger and less privileged than members of the RAF (Schmidtchen 1981: 24). Also, the internal structure of the group differed from that of the RAF. The RAF was a hierarchical and centralist organisation and, after Baader’s rescue in 1970, operated entirely underground (Kraushaar 2006b: 512). The founding members of the MJ2, in contrast, avoided going underground for as long as possible. Moreover, they aimed to create a less hierarchical, horizontally connected network of local groups (Wunschik 2006: 557).

Unlike the RAF, the MJ2 sought to focus on attacks against property rather than actions against people. However, as Della Porta

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45 Chapter 3 offers a detailed discussion of this process.
highlights, they did not stick to this principle (1995: 125). In fact, the very first attack by the newly founded group resulted in a casualty. On 2 February 1972, MJ2 members planted bombs in the British yachting club in Berlin and in two cars belonging to the Allied forces. The attack was a rather spontaneous and ill-prepared response to the events during ‘Bloody Sunday’ on 30 January in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{46} One civilian died whilst trying to deactivate one of the explosive devices. However, this fatal accident did not keep the group from executing dozens of other attacks including bombings, abductions and bank robberies. After the first group members were arrested, the MJ2 focused – similarly to the RAF – a great part of its energy on the liberation of imprisoned comrades (Wunschik 2006: 539). Many attacks continued to be of a more spontaneous nature and most did not result in casualties. Throughout its existence, the members of the MJ2 killed three people. The RAF, by contrast, was responsible for the death of 34. Two years after their last strike in 1978, a part of the group declared the end of the MJ2 and joined the RAF (Die Bewegung 2. Juni 1980).

Unlike the RAF and the MJ2, the Revolutionary Cells originated in Frankfurt (Markovits and Gorski 1993: 73). So far, little is known about the history and membership of the group. State and police authorities have long underrated the expansion and strength of this militant leftist network (Langguth 1981: 224, Kraushaar 2006c: 595). Allegedly, the sociology student Wilfried Böse came up with the idea to create the group

\textsuperscript{46} On 30 January 1972, British soldiers killed and wounded 26 unarmed protesters during a demonstration in Derry, Northern Ireland (Walsh 2000: 10). For a detailed discussion of the events on that day and their relevance to the Irish Troubles, see: Hayes and Campbell 2005, Alison 2009.
in 1973 (Kraushaar 2006c: 593). Like other founding members of the RC, Böse was associated with the leftist publishing house ‘Red Star’ [Roter Stern] in Frankfurt (ibid.: 590). As the name of the group indicates, the founding members of the RC set out to create a network of loosely connected autonomous revolutionary cells. This structure was fundamentally different to that of the RAF, which had been cut to the quick by the arrest of its leading members in 1972. Another crucial difference between the groups was that most members of the RC did not go underground. Instead, they tried to combine illegal activities with legal forms of protest and with everyday activities. Unlike the MJ2, most members of the RC did actually remain true to this principle. For this reason, the group is sometimes referred to as an ‘after work guerrilla’ [Feierabend-Guerrilla] (ibid: 593).

Similarly to the MJ2, the RC rejected the dogmatism and elitism of the RAF. In an interview, a group member explained that the RC wanted to ‘create small nuclei of resistance, who work autonomously in different spheres of society, and who fight, intervene, act as a protection, [and] form a part of the political mass movement’47 (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 81). Throughout the history of the RC, members of the group participated in a range of local and national protest movements and political subcultures including the New Women’s Movement, the squatting scene, the Spontis and the antinuclear movement (Langguth 1981: 224). Between 1973 and 1993, the RC carried out more than 180 attacks to publicise and assert the demands of the groups and movements

47Gegenmacht in kleinen Kernen zu organisieren, die autonom in den verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen arbeiten, kämpfen, intervenieren, schützen, ein Teil von der politischen Massenarbeit sind’
that they wanted to support and to spread militant protest among their members. Unlike women in the RAF and in the MJ2, a number of the women in the RC identified as feminists and committed the first attack in the history of political violence in West Germany that had a distinctively feminist agenda. On 5 March 1975, a group calling itself ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ planted a bomb at the Federal Court of Justice to protest against the court’s decision on the abortion ban. The case study in the fourth chapter offers a detailed discussion of this attack.

The RC is best known for two fatal attacks: a raid during the OPEC-conference in Vienna in 1975, and the joint hijacking of an Israeli passenger flight with members of the Popular Liberation Front of Palestine in July 1976, which became the bloodiest attack in the history of the RC. Dozens of people, including one Israeli soldier, all hijackers, four hostages, and 45 Ugandan soldiers were killed. Yet my discussion of the RC shows that these fatal attacks are hardly representative of its overall activities; and Neidhardt’s study supports this conclusion. While there were exceptions (e.g. the attack on the Hessian politician Heinz-Herbert Karry in 1981), most attacks by the RC did not result in casualties. Overall, the tactics of the RC tended to be less brutal than those of the RAF. ‘They avoided’, as Della Porta notes, ‘using guns and sophisticated explosives, and stated that they wanted to carry out their revolution using (with imagination) “everyday” materials – such as glue to destroy the much hated ticket machines or other easy-to-find ingredients for small “home-made” bombs’ (1995: 125). Doubtlessly, such strikes caught fewer headlines than planned abductions and murders. In an interview from
1975, one member of the RC argued ‘90% of our work is invisible and makes no noise’ (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 79).

The RZ formed in the mid-1970s as a subgroup within the Revolutionary Cells. The founding members of the group chose the name ‘Red Zora’ [Rote Zora] for two reasons. Firstly, in German the name has the same initials as the RC, indicating the groups’ shared ideological and structural principles. The name Red Zora also refers to a children’s book from 1941, which the group saw as a source of inspiration for its politics. The Red Zora and her Gang [Die Rote Zora und ihre Bande] tells the story of a wild gang of street children led by a young girl. Like the RC, the RZ wanted to create a network of autonomous groups who fought with everyday materials rather than firearms or sophisticated bombs. But the RZ had a radical feminist philosophy. ‘Our dream’, explained two group members in 1984, ‘is that there are small gangs of women everywhere; and that a rapist, trafficker of women, wife batterer, porn dealer, creepy gynaecologist must fear that a gang of women finds him, attacks him, and humiliates him in public’ (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 462). As this statement indicates, the RZ understood itself as a militant part of the women’s movement.

In 1977, the RZ carried out a first attack. To protest against the ‘lucrative business of illegal abortions’ and for a decriminalisation of abortions, the women planted a bomb at the German Medical Association in Cologne, which supported the abortion ban. Throughout its history,

48 ‘90 % unserer Arbeit sieht und hört man nicht’
49 ‘Unser Traum ist, daß es überall kleine Frauenbanden gibt – wenn in jeder Stadt ein Vergewaltiger, ein Frauenhändler, ein prügelnder Ehemann, ein frauenfeindlicher Zeitungsverleger, ein Pornohändler, ein schweinischer Frauenarzt damit rechnen und sich davor fürchten müßte, daß eine Bande Frauen ihn aufspürt, ihn angreift, ihn öffentlich bekannt und lächerlich macht’
women’s personal and political self-determination in Germany and other countries remained a priority of the RZ. However, Chapter 5 shows that the group did not want to be confined to ‘women’s issues’, and also took up issues that did not uniquely affect women. The best known and most successful campaign by the Red Zora was a series of attacks against the German clothing chain ‘Adler’ in 1987. Whilst using explosive devices and other dangerous items, the RZ was anxious to avoid harming civilians and direct confrontations with the police. Between 1977 and 1995, the group committed dozens of attacks that caused substantial property damage.

1.3 Theoretical Background

1.3.1 Terrorism and Political Violence

In March 2010, two women killed 40 commuters and hurt 160 more on a train into Moscow with explosives that they had strapped around their waists. According to Mia Bloom, the Metro Bombings in 2010 constituted ‘the deadliest incident in Moscow since female suicide bombers brought down two planes and attacked the subway in 2004’ (Bloom 2011: 7). These and other spectacular attacks by women have drawn the attention of scholars to the fact that not only men but also women ‘are capturing hostages, engaging in suicide bombings, hijacking airplanes, and abusing prisoners’ (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007: 1). According to Karla J. Cunningham, ‘female involvement with terrorist activity is widening

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50 The case study in Chapter 5 offers a detailed account of this campaign and public responses to it.
ideologically, logistically and regionally’ (Cunningham 2003: 172) – and other recent publications support this hypothesis (see, e.g. Ness 2007, Jacques and Taylor 2009, Bloom 2011). While it is difficult to verify the accuracy of such a broad claim, there can be little doubt that female involvement in political violence and armed conflicts has a new visibility. ‘Whatever the actual changes in the level of women’s participation in terrorism’, highlight the editors of another recent book on the subject, ‘media coverage and scholarly attention have both increased exponentially in the last five years’ (Sjoberg and Gentry 2011: 2).

The fact that Cunningham, Bloom, Sjoberg and Gentry all use the term ‘terrorism’ should not lead to the conclusion that they are talking about the same thing. Definitions of terrorism vary from country to country and from institution to institution. Sometimes, they vary even within publications. The editors of the anthology Women, Gender, Terrorism, for instance, acknowledge that some contributions to the volume draw on ‘definitions coming from state departments, departments of defence and international organisations’, whilst others use the term in a ‘representational way’, i.e., ‘assigning it only to the meaning that it has already acquired in its frequent use’, and yet others ‘criticise and interrogate both’ (Sjoberg and Gentry 2011: 10). Some authors avoid the concept of terrorism altogether because of its politically charged nature (see, e.g. Eager 2008).

Given the negative connotations of the term, it is hardly surprising that most groups that are labelled as terrorists, including the four groups in the focus of this thesis, do not identify with this label. Charles Tilly rightly emphasises that ‘one person’s terrorist is another person’s
freedom fighter’ (Tilly 2003: 237). Audrey Kurth Cronin provides an excellent example of the ways in which labels for the same people can change over the years: ‘ANC leader Nelson Mandela, imprisoned for terrorist acts from 1964 to 1990, was elected South Africa’s first president following the end of apartheid’ (Cronin 2006: 24). In 1993, Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk received the Nobel Peace Prize ‘for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa’ (The Nobel Foundation 1993).

With a few exceptions, previous studies of political violence in West Germany and publications on women’s involvement in political violence in the FRG and other geo-political contexts use the concept terrorism, although they do not use it in the same way. Many of the existing studies define terrorism as a specific form of violence (Neidhardt 1982, Groebel and Feger 1982, Boeden 1989, Münkler and other contributions in Kraushaar 2006a). To distinguish it from other forms of violence, Henner Hess defines terrorism as a range of surprising acts of physical violence that seek to have a psychological effect on a bigger group than the immediate victims, and that are part of a broader political strategy (Hess 1988: 59). While many authors focus on terrorist acts and the groups behind them, others discuss terrorism primarily or exclusively as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Peter Waldmann, probably one of the best-known proponents of this approach, argues that terrorism is ‘primarily a communicative strategy’ (Waldmann 2005: 15). According to Waldmann, terrorist attacks are embedded into complex communicative processes involving not only the perpetrators but also the victims and the
audience of terrorist attacks (ibid.: 36). In her monograph *Gendering Terror*, Dominique Grisard goes even further than Waldmann. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault and other poststructuralist thinkers, Grisard criticises that a great part of the scholarly literature on terrorism would (still) look for ‘a reality behind discourses’ on terrorism (Grisard 2011: 12). According to Grisard, such a reality does not exist. Consequently, she argues that researchers have ‘to throw the distinction between social reality and media reality overboard’\(^{51}\) to develop a better understanding of terrorism (ibid.).

Waldmann and Grisard are right to emphasise that communicative processes and discursive formations shape what we define, discuss and analyse as terrorism. This, however, should not lead us to conclude that material bodies, concrete acts and manifestations of political violence do not exist outside of the media or that they are irrelevant for an understanding of terrorism. Having learnt a lesson from the feminist debate on sexual difference in the 1980s (see section on sexual difference in this chapter), I do not want to create a false dichotomy between ‘essentialist’ and ‘social-constructivist’ notions of terrorism. Rather I understand terrorism here as a complex social phenomenon based on a dynamic interplay of embodied acts, situational dynamics, a range of social actors and symbolic formations, all of which deserve close analysis. Most authors share this view, and their definitions of terrorism try to account for the complexity of this phenomenon. Yet any definition will not only sharpen but also limit our focus. ‘[A]t a minimum’, argues

\(^{51}\) ‘Wer der Logik des Terrorismusphänomens auf die Spur kommen will, […] muss die Unterscheidung zwischen sozialer und medialer Wirklichkeit über Bord werfen.’
Audrey Kurth Cronin, ‘the concept has the following four characteristics: a fundamentally political nature, the symbolic use of violence, purposeful targeting of non-combatants, carried out by non-state actors’ (Cronin 2009: 7). While this thesis focuses on non-state actors who carried out symbolic acts of violence for political reasons, it will become apparent that at least some of them did not purposefully target civilians.

This thesis refers to ‘militant leftist groups’ rather than to ‘terrorist organisations’ and discusses ‘acts of political violence’ rather than ‘terrorist attacks’. This is not because I think that it is wrong to use these terms or because at least some of the organisations and events discussed could not be understood as terrorist. On the contrary, a number of recent studies use the concept well and offer critical insights for this thesis (see, e.g. Weinhauer et al. 2006, Diewald-Kerkmann 2009, Colvin 2009, Bielby 2012, Grisard 2011). As mentioned previously, the Ministry of Interior also classified the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ as terrorist organisations. For two reasons, I have abstained from using the term terrorism in this thesis. Firstly, the concept is emotionally charged and highly controversial. Given the pejorative nature that the term developed over the years, it is hardly surprising that the four groups in the centre of this study did not identify with this label. They presented their attacks as part of an ‘armed struggle’ or ‘guerrilla war’ against the existing political order. Patricia Melzer (2009) and Jeremy Varon (2004) try to account for this constitutive difference by using self-chosen and externally imposed labels contextually. Secondly, an exclusive focus on terrorist events and groups would limit the scope of this research project. Following Donatella Della Porta, I do not use ‘terrorism’ as an analytical concept in this thesis.
because it is too a narrow category to analyse political protest in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s.

In her comparative study *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State*, Della Porta analyses political protest movements in Italy and the FRG between 1960 and 1990. In the introduction, the author criticises terrorism studies for ‘[c]oncentrating on the most radical forms of political violence’ and thereby isolating ‘their object of interest from the larger political system’ (Della Porta 1995: 5). According to Della Porta, violent protest in West Germany ‘emerged from the gradual radicalisation of political actors’ (ibid.: 7) and has to be analysed in the context of broader social movements. By now, this fact is widely acknowledged in terrorism and security studies (for a recent example, see: Adraoui and Waldmann 2012: 11), but a large part of recent research still focuses on a few central actors and events. This study seeks to broaden the scope of research on political violence in West Germany. It will become apparent that some of the groups and attacks in the centre of this study meet most if not all criteria in conventional definitions of terrorism, but this is not the case with others. Despite all ideological, organisational and tactical differences between the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ, all carried out acts of political violence. Following Della Porta, I understand political violence in this thesis as ‘a specific repertoire of collective action that involved physical force, considered at that time as illegitimate in the dominant culture’ (1995: 3-4). As we have seen, acts of political violence during the period examined in my dissertation included both attacks against property and against people.
Social behaviour that is understood as political violence according to this definition is, of course, not the only form of violence that could or should be understood as political. Like terrorism, violence is a contested concept that ‘defies easy categorisation’ and is at least to some degree ‘in the eye of the beholder’ (Schepers-Hughes and Bourgois 2005: 2). While most authors seem to agree that there is no society or cultural area that has been free of violence (Englander 2003: 1, Imbusch in Heitmeyer and Hagan 2003: 14), their definitions and theoretical approaches to analysing its various manifestations differ considerably. In the anthology Violence in War and Peace, Nancy Schepers-Hughes and Philippe Bourgeois reject the idea that violence is always exceptional, spectacular and visible. As mentioned in the introduction, I do not want to divert attention from the fact that domestic abuse and sexual violence against women is less visible but far more common than such attacks. According to them, violence is ‘a human condition’ that is ‘everywhere in social practice’ (ibid.: 2, 21).52

Schepers-Hughes and Bourgeois convincingly argue that peacetime rape, abuse in the family, and ‘assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value’ that involve no direct physical harm are also forms of violence (ibid.: 1) and that ‘gender operates through all forms of violence’, although it is mainly associated with gender based violence (ibid.: 22). In the anthology On Violence, Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim rightly emphasise that ‘theories of violence must be as varied as the practices

52 Scholars have tried to account for the ubiquity and diversity of violence with broad definitions of the concept. One of the most prominent examples is Johan Galtung, according to whom violence is ‘present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations’ (Galtung 1969: 168).
within which they occur’ (Lawrence and Karim 2007: 7). This thesis focuses on only one of many visible and invisible forms of violence. While this study may offer valuable insights for broader debates on violence, it does not seek to come up with a universal theory of female violence and could not possibly do so.

1.3.2 Previous Scholarship on Women’s Involvement in Political Violence

Research on female involvement in political violence and terrorism still accounts for a relatively small part of scholarly work in terrorism and security studies, but it is clearly on the rise (Jackson et al. 2009). As researchers from a range of disciplines (e.g. politics, Women’s studies, anthropology and psychology) contribute to the growing body of literature, and as their research questions vary as much as their analytical frameworks, it becomes increasingly difficult to give a comprehensive overview of publications on this subject. A survey from 2009 reveals a nearly three-fold increase of scholarly work on female terrorism between 2002 and 2006 alone (Jacques and Taylor 2009: 502). Although the authors consider only publications in the English language that were released between 1986 and 2006, the publications examined cover a number of geographical regions, historical periods and political contexts. Among other texts the survey mentions analyses of female involvement in militant anarchist groups in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (see, e.g. Knight 1979), publications about women in Latin American guerrilla movements in the 1960s and 1970s (see, e.g. Reif 1986, Kampwirth 2002, Gonzalez-Perez 2006) and literature on women in
militant organisations active in the 21st century such as global Islamist network Al-Qaeda and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in South Asia (Alison 2003).

In their survey, Karen Jacques and Paul Taylor mention ‘European left-wing terrorism’ only in passing and do not define what they mean by this term. Between the late 1960s and the mid-1990s, militant leftist groups fought for revolutions in a number of Western democracies, including but not limited to European countries. In the 1970s and 1980s, women were actively involved in militant leftist groups in West Germany, in Italy (Della Porta 1995, de Cataldo Neuburger and Valentini 1996, Wunderle 2006), France (Dartnell 1995) and other European countries. Jacques and Taylor fail to acknowledge that militant leftist groups operated in this period also in Japan (Steinhoff 1989, Farrell 1990, Derichs 2006) and in the US (Varon 2004, Juchler 2006). The Japanese ‘Red Army’ and the American ‘Weather Underground’ also had female supporters, members and leaders (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 4-5). In fact, the active participation of women constitutes a distinct characteristic of militant leftist violence between the 1960s and mid-1990s that David C. Rapoport (2004) defined as the ‘third wave of modern terrorism’ (Schmid 2011: 231).53

At latest since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, events and groups associated with the ‘fourth wave of terrorism’ have clearly dominated media reports and scholarly publications in Western countries. In this

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53 Alex P. Schmid and Bradley McAllister rightly emphasise that neither nationalist attacks between 1920 and 1960 nor religiously inspired violence since the 1970s – which they take to constitute the second and the fourth waves of terrorism – were characterised by such an active participation of women. However, women played active roles in Anarchist political violence between 1870 and the 1920s, which Rapoport defined as the ‘first wave of modern terrorism’ (Schmid 2011: 231).

From the very beginning, references to deviant, criminal and violent women in a range of historical and political contexts featured prominently in debates and publications on female participation in the RAF and other militant leftist groups. Dominique Grisard highlights that the active involvement of women in political violence in the 1970s rekindled interest in the Russian Anarchists, who were now presented as
‘predecessors’ of women in the RAF and other militant leftist groups (Grisard 2011: 48ff). Hanno Balz mentions a range of other female figures in history and mythology who were relevant in this context:

In ancient times, there was Homer’s Amazon queen Penthesilea and the Greek myth of Medea who killed her sons. Later, there were Kriemhild in the Nibelungen saga, Jean d’Arc and the ‘bloodthirsty’ women of the French Revolution. Finally, there were female guards in concentration camps during the Third Reich. What all have in common, is that their violence is carried out as revenge and rage, expressed in bloodthirsty ecstasy, and is deeply irrational.54 (Balz 2008: 201)

As the quote above illustrates, some researchers who seek to investigate female participation in political violence may themselves end up repeating stereotypes about women without critically questioning these representations.

Clare Bielby’s analysis of representations of violent women in newspaper and magazine articles from the 1960s and 1970s shows that the demonisation and sexualisation of female perpetrators of violence was not limited to members of militant leftist groups. Bielby’s study indicates that ‘as far as the majority of newspapers and magazines are concerned, there is no such thing as a politically violent woman; regardless of why she might think she is being violent, it is actually all about her body, her

54 ‘In der Antike ist es bei Homer beispielsweise die Amazonenkönigin Penthesilea und im griechischen Mythos Medea, die ihre Söhne tötete. Später sind es Kriemhild in der Nibelungensage, Jean d’Arc und die “blutrünstigen” Frauen der Französischen Revolution, schließlich die KZ-Wächterinnen im Nationalsozialismus. Ihnen allen ist gemein, dass sich ihre Gewaltanwendung als Rache, Toben und in der blutrünstigen Ekstase ausdrückt, also letztlich etwas zutiefst Irrationales’
sexuality, her oedipal history, and her uncontrollable emotions’ (Bielby 2012: 1).

In a study of 44 court cases against members of the RAF and MJ2, Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann comes to a similar conclusion to Bielby. Rather than understanding female participation in the two groups as a result of political considerations, Diewald-Kerkmann reasons, researchers, journalists and legal authorities have drawn on three different arguments to explain it. According to the first one, women carry out violent attacks because violence lies in their nature. Diewald-Kerkmann highlights that journalists and legal authorities who draw on this model usually evoke stereotypical notions of femininity, for example, by depicting women in militant leftist groups as irrational, emotional and dependent on men (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 5). A second – and no less problematic – line of argumentation presents female perpetrators of violence as deviant women, i.e. morally bad, mentally ill or otherwise different from normal women. This line of argumentation can be traced back to Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero’s Criminal woman, the prostitute, and the normal woman (first published in 1893) and the work of other pioneers in the field of criminology (cf. Grisard 2011: 37, 41, Bielby 2012: 75). Diewald-Kerkmann uses the case of Ulrike Meinhof to illustrate this line of argumentation. Several authors and public authorities have claimed that Meinhof’s decision to join the armed struggle was related to brain damage caused by a surgery during Meinhof’s pregnancy (ibid.: 6). According to this model, Meinhof was literally out of her mind. Drawing on a third explanatory model, authors and self-proclaimed experts on
female terrorism have argued that women joined militant leftist groups because they were feminists (ibid.: 6-7).

Since the 1970s, feminist activists, journalists and scholars have firmly rejected claims that female participation in militant leftist groups was a result of the women’s movement. Apart from wanting to correct factually incorrect claims, feminists in West Germany saw a political need to oppose a criminalisation and demonisation of the feminist struggle as a whole. In 1978, the editor of the feminist anthology Frauen und Terror, Susanne von Paczensky, pointed out that ‘it is not enough to dismiss the link between terror and emancipation. For the sake of our conflicting loyalties, we have to examine it closely and carefully’ (Paczensky 1978: 12).

Whilst condemning sexist attacks against women in militant leftist groups by journalists and other public authorities, the authors made clear that they considered women in the RAF neither feminist nor emancipated. In her contribution to the volume, Margarete Fabricius-Brand argues ‘women who join terrorist groups live in circumstances in which they must radically deny their economic, cultural and psychological needs. […] Therefore, they fully correspond to the image of the unemancipated woman’ (ibid.: 67). A number of recent studies have adopted and developed the arguments in Frauen und Terror (Bandhauer-Schöffmann 2009, Vukadinović 2009, Vukadinović 2010, Grisard 2011,

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55 ‘Es genügt nicht, den Zusammenhang zwischen Terror und Emanzipation einfach zurückzuweisen, um unserer eigenen Loyalitätskonflikte willen müssen wir ihn genau und gewissenhaft untersuchen.’

56 ‘Frauen, die sich terroristischen Gruppen angeschlossen haben, leben unter Bedingungen, in denen sie ihre ökonomischen, kulturellen und psychischen Bedürfnisse radikal verleugnen müssen. […] Insofern entsprechen sie voll dem Bild der unemanzipierten Frau’
Bielby 2012). Irene Bandhauer-Schöffman concludes ‘In contrast to the militant women’s group Red Zora that understood itself as feminist and carried out attacks in the field of gender politics in the 1980s, the link to the women’s movement was externally imposed on female terrorists in the 1970s’57 (Bandhauer-Schöffmann 2009: 84).

This study reveals that this claim is not entirely true. The discussion in Chapter 4 shows that the founding members of the RC quickly embraced ideas and topics in the New Women’s Movement, and that group members conducted attacks with an explicitly feminist agenda as early as 1975. Virtually all studies of female participation in militant leftist groups in the 1970s, however, ignore militant feminist protest in this period.58 Similar to Bandhauer-Schöffmann (2009: 84), Balz (2008: 225), Diewald-Kerkmann (2009: 18-19) and Grisard (2011: 214) mention the RC and/or RZ, but they do not offer a detailed discussion of ideology, structure and activities of these groups. The authors give different reasons for this decision. Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann does not consider members of the RC and RZ in her study, because they did not go underground (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 18-19). Other authors do not discuss militant protest with a feminist background because they consider violence and feminism irreconcilable or because they analyse sources that do not mention the RC and the RZ. Since a great part of the media coverage in the 1970s focuses exclusively on women in the RAF and MJ2, it comes as

57 ‘Im Unterschied zur militanten Frauengruppe Rote Zora […] die sich als feministische Gruppe verstand und in den 1980er Jahren ihre Aktionen im politischen Feld der Geschlechterpolitik setzte […], war der Konnex zwischen Terroristinnen der 1970er Jahre und der Frauenbewegung ein von außen herangetragener’

58 In a recent publication, Patricia Melzer acknowledges the lack of research on militant feminist protest in the FRG (Melzer 2012). Melzer’s essay provides valuable insights into feminist militancy in Hamburg in the 1980s, but she does not discuss events in the 1970s.
no surprise that most studies that draw mainly or exclusively on this material ignore feminist militancy in the RC and RZ.

This study offers a detailed analysis of the roles of women in the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ and in concrete manifestations of political violence. Its main contribution to the existing body of research consists in identifying and comparing different forms of political militancy among women in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. Where possible, my discussion draws on previous research. While there are a vast number of publications on political violence in West Germany, the literature reviews in the following chapters illustrate that these publications focus almost exclusively on the RAF. There is some literature on the MJ2, even less on the RC and virtually none on the RZ. To investigate these groups, and thus to gain new insights into female participation in political violence in West Germany, there is a need for new primary research. I have made a contribution to this by collecting data in archives and by conducting interviews with former group members.

So far, interviews have played only a marginal role in scholarship on women’s involvement in political violence in West Germany. As highlighted previously, Susanne von Paczensky’s Frauen und Terror from 1978 was the first book-length publication on women in militant leftist groups in Germany. In the preface, the editor highlights that her efforts to enter into a dialogue with detained RAF members failed, because the women refused to speak of their personal experiences (Paczensky 1978: 12). In the 1990s, the journalists Eileen MacDonald and Ulrike Edschmid published the first books on women in militant political groups that were informed by interviews with former members of these organisations.
Apart from small subsections in larger studies (see, e.g. Süllwold 1981, Wunschik 1997) and a number of articles in criminological journals and other periodicals (see, e.g. Dükrop 1978, Korte-Pucklitsch 1979, Jubelius 1981), there were for a long time no scholarly publications on the subject. This changed when the historian Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann published several texts on female participation in the RAF and MJ2 (Diewald-Kerkmann 2006, 2007, 2009). Among other sources, Diewald-Kerkmann drew on interviews with former group members. Around the same time, scholars published a range of essays and books focusing on representations of violent women in the popular media (see, e.g. Balz 2008, Bielby 2012) and in German literature and culture (Fronius and Linton 2008, Colvin and Watanabe-O’Kelly 2009, Bielby and Richards 2010). Other recent publications provide insights into feminist debates on female participation in the RAF and MJ2 (see, e.g. Melzer 2009, Bandhauer-Schöffmann 2009), the life and work of female protagonists in leftist political violence in West Germany (Colvin 2009), and the gendered nature of discourses on terrorism (Vukadinović 2010, Grisard 2011).

Whilst focusing on different issues, a great part of the recent work on female participation in political violence in the 1970s draws on discursive analysis and literary criticism to examine visual and textual representations and self-representations of violent women. This approach has generated important insights. Sarah Colvin’s book *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism* illustrates that a focus on language does not have to mean a lack of interest in the material dimension of political violence. The book begins with a graphic description of the prison cells in
which Meinhof and other founding members of the RAF found a violent death (Colvin 2009: 2-4). Colvin offers an illuminating discussion of ‘the case of Ulrike Meinhof’ that pays careful attention to socio-political, symbolic and material aspects. Whilst also providing valuable insights into female participation in political violence in Germany, other recent studies pay less attention to material practices and corporeal acts.

Drawing on Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and other post-structuralist thinkers, Dominique Grisard offers a lucid analysis of the ways in which different social actors in Switzerland responded to the perceived threat by women in militant leftist groups. Her findings support Vojin Saša Vukadinović’s claim that the prominent role of feminism in terrorism discourses in the 1970s had more to do with a ‘systematic anti-feminism of state, science, clergy and the media’ than with the political stance of women in the RAF (Vukadinović 2010: 54-55). According to Grisard, anti-feminist, anti-terrorist and racist discourses at the time intersected and jointly produced an image of the female terrorist as the antithesis to the white heterosexual male citizen (Grisard 2011: 13).

In some instances, the focus on discourse and representations of violent women resulted in a lack of attention for the materiality of gendered bodies and violent acts. Grisard understands gender and sex as ‘socio-cultural constructions of a hegemonic gender discourse’ based on bourgeois gender norms that can be traced back to the 18th century (ibid.: 18). In a similar vein, Diewald-Kerkmann establishes in the first chapter of her book that ‘Geschlecht’ is ‘no natural-ontological category but a

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59 Diewald-Kerkmann uses the German term ‘Geschlecht’, which can be translated as both ‘gender’ and ‘sex’.
[discursive] construct’60 (ibid.: 11). The definitions that Grisard and Diewald-Kerkmann use allow them to challenge biologistic claims about militant women. While I agree with Grisard that we have no access to a pre- or extra-discursive ‘truth’, I consider it productive and vital for feminist research to acknowledge the limitations of both discourses and discursive analysis. Combining ideas and methods from three dynamic and intersecting theoretical frameworks – new feminist materialisms, philosophies of sexual difference and British Cultural Studies – this study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the material dimensions of women’s involvement in political violence.

1.4 **Methodological Framework**

1.4.1 *The Vital Critique of New Feminist Materialisms*

I can only agree with Stacey Alaimo and Susan Hakman who note that ‘[w]hile no one would deny the ongoing importance of discursive critique and rearticulation for feminist scholarship, the discursive realm is nearly always constituted so as to foreclose attention to lived, material bodies and evolving corporeal practices’ (Alaimo and Hekman 2008: 3). Hekman and Alaimo’s anthology *Material Feminisms* is one of several recent feminist publications that (re)turn to the issue of materiality in feminist research (see, e.g. Coole and Frost 2010, van der Tuin 2011, Grasswick 2011, Barrett and Bolt 2013). A number of recent publications in the interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies express similar emphasis on

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60 ‘dass das Geschlecht keine natürlich-ontologische Kategorie ist, sondern eine [diskursive] Konstruktion’
materiality (see, e.g. Bennett and Joyce 2010, Hicks and Beaudry 2010). ‘It cannot be denied’, explains Iris van der Tuin, ‘that at the present time, Western academia is experiencing a “material turn” in a significant amount of scholarly fields’ and ‘that feminist theory is at the cutting edge of these developments’ (van der Tuin 2011: 271).

What are these ‘new feminist materialisms’, and how do they relate to this thesis? Coole and Frost note that new materialisms have to be pluralised because ‘despite some important linkages between different strands of contemporary work and a more general materialist turn, there are currently a number of distinctive initiatives that resist any simple conflation, not least because they reflect on various levels of materialisation’ (Coole and Frost 2010: 4). Coole and Frost identify three reasons for the emergence of new materialisms: 1) recent developments in the natural sciences, 2) ‘pressing ethical and political concerns that accompany [these] advances’, 3) ‘the feeling […] that [the] dominant constructivist orientation to social analysis is inadequate for thinking about matter, materiality, and politics in ways that do justice to the contemporary context of biopolitics and global political economy’ (ibid.: 5-6). While feminist thinkers associated with the material turn draw on ‘the great materialist philosophies of the nineteenth century, notably those of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud’ (ibid.: 5), they read these texts with and through recent advances in the natural sciences.

While criticising recent developments in feminist research, new feminist materialisms do not dismiss previous scholarship. Rather, they
try to incorporate insights from Marxist feminism\textsuperscript{61}, poststructuralist and postmodern theories. Combining insights from the work of a range of thinkers including the physicist Niels Bohr and poststructuralist theorists Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, Karen Barad develops a concept of ‘posthumanist performativity’. While Barad takes inspiration from Butler’s theory of gender performativity (see following section), she criticises Butler’s anthropocentric approach and seeks to account for the ‘materialisation of all bodies – “human” and “nonhuman” – and the material-discursive practices by which their differential constitutions are marked’ (Barad 2003: 810). The notion of material-discursive practices is central to Barad’s argument. As Barad points out, ‘discourse is not a synonym for language’ (Barad 2007: 146). We can bring out the key point here in relation to Barad’s reading of Foucault. While some theorists have understood Foucault’s discussion of discourse primarily as an investigation of speech acts and linguistic systems themselves, Barad shows that ‘discourse’ for Foucault rather refers to the range of material practices that create the conditions of meaning of statements. ‘According to Foucault, discursive practices are the local sociohistorical material conditions that enable and constrain disciplinary knowledge practices such as speaking, writing, thinking, calculating, measuring, filtering, and concentrating’ (ibid.: 147). Developing this idea further, Barad argues that ‘discursive practices are always already material’ (ibid.: 152), whilst at the same time materiality always has a discursive dimension.

\textsuperscript{61} In the context of this discussion, Marxist feminism can be understood as an ‘old’ feminist materialism, since it is inspired by ‘the insights and oversights of nineteenth-century socialists’ (Hennessy and Ingraham 1997: 3). Rosemary Hennessy and Chrys Ingraham’s anthology \textit{Materialist Feminism} offers a comprehensive overview of key texts in this strand of feminist theory.
If ‘the goal is to think the social and material together’ (ibid.: 30), as Barad suggests, we cannot leave it at recognising that both matter; we need to develop an integral understanding of the roles of human and non-human, material and discursive, cultural and natural practices (ibid.: 25). Drawing on the feminist biologist and philosopher Donna Haraway, Barad proposes a ‘diffractive methodology’ that respects the complex entanglement of these different forces. In physics, diffraction ‘has to do with the ways waves combine when they overlap and the apparent bending and spreading out of waves when they encounter an obstruction’ (ibid.: 28). Drawing on recent insights and experiments in quantum physics, Barad develops a diffractive methodology that offers valuable insights for research within and beyond this context. ‘A diffractive methodology’, explains Barad, ‘provides a way of attending to entanglements in reading important insights and approaches through one another’ (ibid.: 30). Barad’s own work shows just how valuable this methodology can be for feminist research. Her readings of poststructuralist and feminist theory, quantum physics, science studies, critical race theory and other fields offer detailed discussions of debates and ideas within these areas whilst at the same time ‘foster[ing] constructive engagements across (and a reworking of) disciplinary boundaries’ (ibid.: 25). As mentioned previously, this thesis does not discuss theories and experiments in the natural sciences. Yet it takes inspiration from Barad’s trans-disciplinary approach and reads theories and methodologies from different fields with and through one another.

While such a brief discussion can hardly do justice to the complexity and diversity of new feminist materialisms, I hope that it helps
to make clear why this branch of feminist theory is relevant for this study.

If we want to develop a better understanding of political violence, we cannot reduce our analyses to scientific definitions, discursive formations, or specific events. Rather we should acknowledge the ‘conjoint material-discursive nature of [the] constraints, conditions and practices’ (ibid.) that constitute political violence, and that studies can only disclose different aspects of this intricate phenomenon. This thesis includes case studies of concrete attacks, and discloses different perspectives on and responses to these events. Unlike the work of Karen Barad, Donna Haraway and other new materialist thinkers, this thesis does not directly relate to scientific and technological developments. Yet I share their productive critique of recent trends in feminist research and draw in this thesis on concepts and methods that express ‘an emphasis on the mutual interdependence of material, biocultural, and symbolic forces in the making of social and political practices’ (Braidotti 2010: 203-204).

In their book *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*, Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn argue that European philosophies of sexual difference constitute a theoretical framework that can help us to overcome ‘the double bind of biological essentialism and social constructivism’ in feminist discourses (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012: 139). According to Dolphijn and van der Tuin, examples of this tradition in feminist historiography ‘can be found in the so-called “French Feminism”’ from the 1980s (think of Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and

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62 ‘French Feminism’ is, as Christine Delphy and Sylvie A. Gambaudo note, an Anglo-American invention. Thus, the term should neither be understood as an accurate geographical label nor as a common intellectual tradition (Delphy 1995, Gambaudo 2007). Rather, most authors use the notion to refer to ‘issues and figures that have been the most influential to feminist theory in the English-speaking world’ (Oliver 2000: vii).
especially Luce Irigaray) and in today’s new materialist writing as we see it at work in, for instance, publications by Rosi Braidotti and Elizabeth Grosz’ (ibid.). In a Deleuzian vein, van der Tuin and Dolphijn refer to theories of sexual difference as a ‘minor tradition in feminist historiography’ (ibid.). Elsewhere, van der Tuin explains that this is because in ‘the broader field of second-wave feminist epistemology [...] radical feminists of sexual difference were either read as essentialist and confirming the patriarchal norm through leaving it untouched [...] or they were not read at all’ (van der Tuin 2009: 21). This thesis draws extensively on this ‘not so new’ branch of feminist materialism. It seeks to show that this minor tradition in feminist historiography provides vital impulses and useful analytical tools for research on political violence.

1.4.2 The Untapped Potential of Theories of Sexual Difference

In the introduction to a special edition of the journal *diacritics* on ‘Irigaray and the Political Future of Sexual Difference’, Pheng Cheah and Elizabeth Grosz note that Luce Irigaray’s work has been largely ignored in the political and ‘hard’ social sciences (Cheah and Grosz 1998: 5). This includes a great part of the research on women’s involvement in political violence. Many studies in this field ignore difference feminism or dismiss it without thoroughly engaging with it (for a recent example, see: Eager 2008). Irigaray argues that we need to recognise and redefine sexual

Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray – sometimes referred to as the ‘Holy Trinity’ of ‘French Feminism’ (Gambaudo 2007) – are without doubt of particular importance in this context. It is not without irony that none of these ‘French Feminists’ is of French origin. Moreover, Kristeva and Cixous explicitly refuse the label ‘feminist’. For this and other reasons, feminist scholars from France and the US have criticized the tendency in Anglophone debates to refer by French Feminism almost exclusively to the work of these three thinkers (Delphy 1995, Cavallaro 2003).
difference to work towards a female subjectivity that is irreducible to the masculine subject. For many feminists, this position seems ‘strangely reminiscent of the position of defenders of patriarchy: both stress women’s differences from men’ (Grosz 1994: 90). Yet Irigaray’s argument is a fundamentally different one. According to her, the prevailing symbolic and political order is based on a subject who is: ‘one, singular, solitary, historically masculine, the paradigmatic Western adult male, rational, capable’ (Irigaray and Guynn 1995: 7). In this order, there has – argues Irigaray – ‘never really been an other’, since every difference is merely understood as a deviation from the masculine model (ibid.: 8).

According to Irigaray, sexual difference refers to a biological, morphological, semiotic and symbolic otherness between men and women (Irigaray 1997: 310). I believe that this notion of sexual difference can be productive for research on female violence, because it reduces differences between men and women neither to a merely biological nor to a purely discursive construct. In the eyes of gender theorists and other critics, Luce Irigaray overstates and naturalises differences between men and women. They have charged her with ‘essentialism’, a notion that is, as Elizabeth Grosz highlights, ‘rarely defined or explained explicitly in feminist contexts, [and usually] refers to the attribution of a fixed essence to women’ (Grosz 1994: 84). In her essay ‘This Essentialism Which Is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigaray’, Naomi Schor convincingly argues that charges of essentialism tend to be more essentialist than the different feminist positions that they reject so emphatically. Rather than supporting a dichotomous distinction between anti-essentialist and essentialist approaches in feminism, Schor highlights that feminist theory
and politics necessarily implies both a deconstruction and affirmative appropriation of femininity (Schor 1994).

While I think that the charges of essentialism against Irigaray are at least in part polemical, I do not want to argue for an uncritical reading of her work. While she acknowledges that the multiple otherness between men and women is not the only form of difference, I agree with Irigaray’s critics that she does not take sufficient account of class, race and different sexual orientations (see, e.g. Butler and Scott 1992, Stone 2006, Braidotti 2011). To this day, she insists that sexual difference is the ‘most basic, universal and irreducible difference of those which exist in all humanity’, and that there ‘exist only men and women’ in the whole of humanity (Irigaray and Pluháček 2008: 132, 137). These assumptions are problematic for two reasons. Firstly, Irigaray does not account for differences among men and women and excludes people who do not identify as either. Secondly, her focus on sexual difference risks overlooking the fact that race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, and other axes of difference are intersecting factors in the formation of individual and collective identities. To account for these aspects, I read Irigaray’s philosophy of sexual difference with and through the work of Rosi Braidotti and other feminist critics.

Braidotti’s embodied materialism combines insights from a range of theoretical frameworks including ‘old’ and ‘new’ materialisms, continental philosophy, postcolonial theory and the so-called French Feminism. Since her work offers vital insights for a feminist research project on female participation in political violence, I refer to it throughout this thesis. At this point, I want to focus on her critical yet
affirmative reading of Luce Irigaray’s theory of sexual difference. Following Irigaray, Braidotti argues that sexual difference is a complex interplay of multiple aspects and as much a product of specific historical and cultural contexts as related to biological and morphological specificities of bodies. Yet Braidotti does not ‘privilege the masculine/feminine divide as the matrix of all differences’ (Braidotti 2011: 106).

In Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory, Braidotti identifies three coexisting and intersecting layers of difference that are relevant to feminist theory and politics: differences between men and women, differences among women and differences within each woman. Following Irigaray, Braidotti argues that ‘the starting point of the project of sexual difference is the political will to assert the specificity of the lived, female bodily experience’ (ibid.: 152). But Braidotti also emphasises ‘that Woman is a general umbrella term that brings together different kinds of women, different levels of experience and different identities’ (ibid.: 164, emphasis: R.B.). In other words, women differ from each other and from the representational concept ‘woman’, since they have different ethnicities, ages, and classes and have different experiences in their lives. Finally, Braidotti stresses ‘the complexity of the embodied structure of the subject’ (ibid.: 158). According to her, bodies are not fixed and stable entities but constantly evolving interplay of multiple forces, desires and energies (ibid.: 25).

Combined with Braidotti’s critical insights, Irigaray’s concept of sexual difference provides us with a conceptual alternative to definitions that focus primarily or exclusively on the discursive construction of
gender/sex. In my view, this does not mean that we have to dismiss valuable insights from Anglo-American gender theories, although European theories of sexual difference were long opposed to this strand of feminist theory.63 It will become apparent that this thesis combines philosophy of sexual difference with insights from Judith Butler’s work on gender performativity (1988, 1990). According to Butler, gender attributes ‘are not expressive but performative’ and ‘effectively constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal’ (Butler 1990: 180). Butler’s approach to gender is useful for this discussion because it can help to analyse the mimetic acts in which militant women reproduced and challenged gender norms during violent attacks and in their daily lives. She shares with Irigaray and Braidotti a political and theoretical interest in practices that have the potential to subvert the existing gender regime. The starting point for her discussion of subversion, however, is fundamentally different from Irigaray’s. Butler focuses on the subversive potential of drag and other queer performances, because she believes that they can draw attention to the fact that ‘what we invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality’ (Butler 1990: xxiii). Irigaray, by contrast, focuses on the subversive potential of a mimetic appropriation of femininity in the conventional sense.

This brings me to the notion of mimesis, a second concept in European philosophies of sexual difference that is of vital importance for this thesis. Mimesis is, as Jan Campbell highlights, a contested concept

63 “Throughout the 1980s a polemic divided the ‘difference’ inspired feminists [...] from the Anglo-American ‘gender’ opposition. This polemic fed into the debate on essentialism and resulted in a political and intellectual stalemate from which we have just recovered’ (Braidotti 2011: 140).
and has been used in a variety of fields. Commonly, it is defined as ‘the imitation of nature and human behaviour’ (Campbell 2005: 334). ‘Mimesis’, as Matthew Potolsky explains, ‘derives from the [Greek] root mimos, a noun designating both a person who imitates [...] and a specific genre of performance based on the imitation of stereotypical character traits’ (Potolsky 2006:16). While some authors understand mimesis as a mere copy of the real, others have emphasised the creative potential of mimetic performances. Following Plato, Irigaray assumes that mimesis can be both a reproductive and a creative process. Her primary focus, however, is on the second form. Irigaray holds that the position of women in patriarchal societies remains reduced to the role of an ‘other’ to the male subject unless women acknowledge and embrace their biological, morphological, social and cultural otherness. Women, in other words, have to appropriate and redefine femininity – a collective process that Irigaray discusses as a form of creative mimesis. According to Braidotti, ‘Irigaray’s strategy of “mimesis” is a politically empowering sort of repetition, because it addresses simultaneously issues of identity, identifications and political subjecthood’ (Braidotti 2011: 28). Braidotti’s discussion of mimesis combines insights from Irigaray’s and Butler’s theories of subversion. She holds that whether bodily acts are queer or conventional, their subversive potential does not depend on ‘the mimetic impersonation or capacity for repetition of dominant poses, but rather [on] the extent to which these practices open up in-between spaces where alternative forms of political subjectivity can be explored’ (ibid.).
1.4.3 British Cultural Studies – Exploring the Materiality of (Militant) Subcultures

Like feminist research, Cultural Studies is a heterogeneous field that combines methods and theories from different academic disciplines (Turner 2002: 9). According to Ann Gray, it should be understood as ‘a field of inquiry’ rather than a discipline with clear cut boundaries (Gray 2003: 11). At the heart of this inquiry is the question of how we can make sense of lived cultures (ibid.). In this brief overview, I want to focus on British Cultural Studies and Subcultural Studies, because some of the methods and ideas in this school of thought are particularly relevant for this study. Following Raymond Williams, a pioneer of British Cultural Studies, culture can be understood as ‘the peculiar and distinctive “way of life” of a group or class, the meanings, values, and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of belief, in mores or customs, in the uses of objects and material life’ (Von Dirke 1997: 2). Based on this notion of culture, we can define subcultures as sub-sets within the broader social and material context that constitutes a culture. According to Clarke et al, subcultures ‘must be focused around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces, etc. which significantly differentiate them from the wider culture’ (Clarke et al. 2005: 94). As subset of a wider culture, a subculture characteristically features both differences and similarities to society at large and to its ‘parent culture’, i.e., the specific segment of society in which it originates.

Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart, John Clarke and other scholars at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham have, as Ken Gelder highlights, ‘profoundly shaped the interests and
methods of Subcultural Studies’ (Gelder 2005: 81). Researchers associated with the CCCS had an openly political aim: they wanted to explore the subversive potential of subcultures in a class-based society. For the most part, research at the CCCS focused on male youth subcultures in post-WWII Britain with a working-class background such as Punks, ‘Mods’ and Teddy-Boys (see, e.g. Cohen 1972, Hall and Jefferson 1976, Hebdige 1979). Drawing on a range of unconventional sources such as popular culture, literature and practices of everyday life, the authors discussed working-class subcultures in Britain as domains of negotiation, struggle and resistance (Clarke et al. 2005: 98). According to researchers at the CCCS, subcultures produce and express group identities by means of a style that visibly distinguishes them from the dominant culture. This process of ‘stylisation’ implies a resignification of symbols, objects and activities that characterise the parent culture and society at large (ibid.: 101).

To analyse subcultural styles, scholars at the CCCS adopted and adapted methods from a range of academic fields including anthropology, sociology and semiotics. Graeme Turner emphasises that ‘[w]ithin the CCCS there has always been a strong interest in ethnography’64 (Turner 2002: 143). As Clifford Geertz highlights in his seminal book The Interpretation of Culture, ‘The important thing about the anthropologist’s findings is their complex specificness, their circumstantiality’ (Geertz 1973: 23). Borrowing a term from the British

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64 In this context, ethnography refers to ‘a tradition of work in sociology and anthropology that provides techniques for researchers to enter another culture, participate in it and observe it, and then describe the ways in which it makes sense for those within it’ (Turner 2002: 113).
philosopher Gilber Ryle, Geertz sought to offer ‘thick descriptions’ of social environments, by which he meant nuanced and detailed pictures based on ‘material produced by long-term, mainly (though not exclusively) qualitative, highly participative, and almost obsessively fine-comb field study’ (ibid.). This research design, however, could not simply be imported into Cultural Studies – or, indeed, into the study of political violence. Political violence is also a highly contextual and ‘intricately layered phenomenon’, and an ethnographic approach can offer critical insights into armed conflicts and structures of violence (Nordstrom and Robben 1995: 5). But researchers in this field, myself included, are rarely able to ‘immerse themselves in the cultural or social site or worlds of their respondents’ as anthropologists might do during extended periods of field work (Gray 2003: 16). In addition, I study subcultures that are clandestine, and that no longer exist, and I could therefore not directly observe or participate in them. Yet I have tried to come as close to a thick description as the data collected allowed me to.

Dick Hebdige’s influential Subculture: The Meaning of Style illustrates that despite all limitations, an ethnographic approach has a lot to offer to the study of (sub)cultures. Drawing on the work of Stuart Hall, Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes and Antonio Gramsci, Hebdige provides three case studies, in which he discusses ideology, style and material practices in subcultural movements in post-WWII Britain. Inspired by Hebdige’s detailed descriptions of the Punk movement and other youth subcultures in Britain, this analysis provides case studies to draw a picture of the ideology, tactics and activities of militant leftist groups in West Germany that accounts for the discursive-material culture
of political violence. Whilst drawing on Hebdige's approach, I do not agree with his Althusserian notion of ideology. Following Michael Freeden, I want to understand ideology in the context of this thesis not as a static, self-contained and coherent system of political concepts, but as a dynamic and constantly changing framework of different and sometimes contradictory ideas and concepts (cf. Freeden 1996).

In recent years, a number of authors have made important additions to the body of research in cultural and Subcultural Studies and offered important criticism that shall not go unmentioned. Stanley Cohen, for instance, rightly opposes an understanding of all elements of subcultural style as symbols of resistance. According to Cohen, it would be wrong to ‘decode the style in terms only of opposition and resistance’ (Cohen 2005: 163). Indeed, subcultural style is not *per se* subversive. Furthermore, we should bear in mind that, unlike the Punk movement, ‘not every subculture is spectacular, or even “visible”’ (Gelder 2005: 11). Finally, as the work of Angela McRobbie and many other authors illustrates, subcultures are by no means exclusively male or working-class (McRobbie 2000, Driscoll 2002, Halberstam 1998, Brake 1980, Thornton 1995).

A number of studies of protest movements and political violence in the 1970s in West Germany and other countries have used methods and concepts from Subcultural Studies productively (see, e.g. Grob 1985, Klimke and Scharloth 2008, Weinhauer et al. 2006). Whilst focusing on different research questions and subcultural groups, these authors share the basic assumption that the radicalisation of individuals and acts of political violence are ‘the result of political and social processes that
involve a wider range of people and cannot be analysed separately\(^{65}\) (Adraoui and Waldmann 2012: 11). Whether one refers to these subcultural scenes as ‘radical milieu’, as Peter Waldmann and Mohamad-Ali Adroui suggest, or in different terms, they are clearly of vital importance for the development of militant groups. For this reason, the discussion of each group in the centre of this thesis includes a detailed discussion of the subcultural background within and against which it developed.

### 1.4.4 Research Methods

This study offers a qualitative analysis of women’s involvement in political violence. This is not for ideological but for practical reasons.\(^ {66}\) ‘[Q]uantitative methods’, explains Miranda Alison, ‘rely on large sample sizes which are difficult to obtain when it comes to secretive illegal organisations’ (Alison 2009: 22). While there are empirical studies of the RAF and MJ2 (Schmidtchen 1981) and female participation in these groups (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009), these publications contain little or no information about the RC and RZ. Unlike the RAF and MJ2, members of the RC and RZ avoided going underground and most of them did not appear on any wanted lists. Until more data about the two groups and their members becomes available, it will remain virtually impossible to

\(^{65}\) ‘das Resultat von politischen und sozialen Prozessen, die einen breiteren Kreis von Personen involvieren und nicht isoliert von diesem untersucht werden können’

\(^{66}\) Rather than categorically opposing quantitative research methods, I agree with Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber that quantitative research methods ‘are not antithetical to feminist inquiry, per se, but careful attention needs to be paid to the types of questions researchers ask, who is the subject of enquiry, how these methods are practised, and to what extent their data analysis, findings and interpretation reinforce the status quo or are in fact used to promote social change and social justice goals’ (Hesse-Biber 2010: 170-171).
offer a quantitative study of the RC and RZ. Yet this is not the only reason why I have decided to draw on a qualitative approach. The primary reason is that a qualitative approach enables me to provide an in-depth analysis of female participation in political violence that accounts for significant differences between, and developments in, militant leftist groups in West Germany that have been neglected by previous studies.

Sandra Harding rightly insists that there is no ‘distinct feminist method of research’ (ibid.: 1). What distinguishes feminist studies from other research is, according to this argument, not so much the choice of methods as the context in which evidence is gathered and used. ‘Regardless of their epistemological and ontological differences, what distinguishes feminist researchers (of whatever gender) is some shared political and ethical commitment that makes them accountable to a community of women with moral and political interests in common’ (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002: 16). To highlight that women ‘may have common situations and experiences’ (Braidotti 2011: 156) does not imply that they are a homogeneous or ‘naturally’ defined group. While some criticise the feminist insistence on the category ‘women’ as a homogenising universalism (Riley 1988, Scott 1999, Butler 1990, Wittig in Conboy et al. 1997), I agree with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1996: 214) and Rosi Braidotti (2011: 122) that there is still a need for strategic essentialism in a range of academic and political contexts. Following Braidotti, I assume that ‘a feminist approach entails that priority is granted to issues of gender or, rather, of sexual difference in connection with the recognition of differences among women’ (Braidotti 2011: 25-26). To collect data that allows the discussion of differences among
women, this study draws on an approach that combines a number of methods of data collection (multimethod approach).

Multimethod approaches are common in research on political violence and have been used in previous studies on women’s involvement in militant leftist groups in the 1970s. Whilst focusing on a discursive analysis of court files from the Federal Archives, Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann’s study of trials against women in the RAF and MJ2 also draws on a range of other sources including interviews with legal and police authorities, with politicians, and with four of the 48 women in the centre of her study. Sadly, the author does not elaborate on her interview techniques, and it seems that her conversations with former RAF and MJ2 members have not primarily served to incorporate their views but to get their permission to work with personal documents in the Federal Archives (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 20). I agree with Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy that ‘multimethod designs, in their best execution, do not simply rely on more than one method of data collection for the sake of yielding “more data” per se’ (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006: 20). Ideally, different methods used should ‘interact with each other and inform the research process as a whole’ (ibid.). This study draws on information gathered from three sources: the existing body of literature on political violence, archives, and interviews. It will become apparent that the data collected is hardly coherent, sometimes contradictory and leaves a number of important questions unanswered. Precisely because it reveals such contradictions, resistances and silences in discourses on female participation in political violence, a multimethod approach can help us to develop a better understanding of this complex phenomenon.
At all stages of the research process, I tried to be conscious of the political and ethical concerns that arise from the sensitive nature of the issue at stake. According to Claire Renzetti and Raymond Lee a sensitive topic is ‘one that potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders problematic for the researcher and/or the researched the collection, holding, and/or dissemination of research data’ (Renzetti and Lee 1993). A substantial threat may ‘take the form of psychic costs, such as guilt, shame or embarrassment’ or ‘the possibility of discovery and sanction’ (ibid.: 4, 5). Recent events have shown that both aspects are relevant to this study. In 2012, two women stood trial for crimes that they had allegedly carried out as members of the RAF and RC in the 1970s. The trials were accompanied by negative reports and personal attacks against the two women in the media.67 Whilst taking a critical stance, this study avoids personal attacks and moral judgements. It seeks to work towards a better understanding of women’s involvement in political violence, but I have been careful not to disclose information that could lead to the prosecution of participants in the study.

Although this position is not without controversy, most feminist researchers would agree that a feminist approach entails a critique of the subject-object split in the research process (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006: 26). This is sometimes seen as a weakness of feminist studies. Caroline Ramazanoğlu and Janet Holland highlight that it ‘is easy to class feminist knowledge as unscientific, biased and lacking in authority’ (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002: 2). However, as they insist, ‘the problems raised by

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67 An article in the Frankfurter Rundschau, for example, mocked Sonja Suder as ‘mater dolorosa’ of the radical Left (Behr 2012), and a Bild journalist expressed his shock at the ‘bizarre cheering for geriatric terrorists’ in court (Gärtner 2012).
feminist methodology are not peculiar to feminism’ (ibid.). Donna Haraway famously argues that ‘[r]elativism and totalisation are both “god tricks” promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully, common myths in rhetorics surrounding Science’ (Haraway 1988: 584). Rather than giving up on objectivity, Haraway and other feminist theorists promote a notion of feminist objectivity that acknowledges the situated and partial nature of all knowledge. ‘Feminist objectivity’, argues Haraway, ‘means quite simply situated knowledges’ (ibid.: 581). In a similar vein, Sandra Harding argues that it increases rather than diminishes the objectivity of research projects if authors introduce a ‘subjective element’ into the analysis (Harding 1987: 9). According to Harding the ‘best feminist analysis insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of research’ (ibid.).

Inspired by Adrienne Rich (1985), Rosi Braidotti argues for a ‘politics of location’ that acknowledge the situated and partial perspective of the (feminist) researcher. She defines politics of location as ‘a method as well as a political tactic that aims at accounting for the diversity and complexity within any given category – like women, feminists, lesbians, gay – while avoiding cognitive and moral relativism and thus safeguarding political and ethical agency’ (Braidotti 2011: 15). By location, Braidotti means in this context no self-appointed position, but ‘a collectively shared and constructed, jointly occupied spatiotemporal territory’ (ibid.: 16). In a nutshell, the politics of location can be understood as ‘cartographies of power that rest on a form of self-criticism,
a critical genealogical self narrative: they are relational and outside directed’ (ibid.). Following Braidotti, Haraway, Harding and other feminist thinkers, I assume that my research is both enabled and limited by my subjective position. As a white woman born in West Germany, I share gender, nationality, ethnic background and mother tongue with the women interviewed for this thesis. Most of them shared my middle class background, and they had been part of political groups and initiatives before joining the armed struggle. More than a few are still involved in political activism. Most interviewees wanted to know a lot about me and my research project and agreed to meet me only after they knew that I am not ‘only’ a scholar but also a political activist.

When approaching possible interviewees for this research project, I tried to be as sensitive and careful as possible. Three members of the Red Zora, two members of the Revolutionary Cell, one member of the Red Army Faction and dozens of contemporary witnesses have shared their views and experiences with me. All participants in the research project chose to be interviewed freely and voluntarily. To create and maintain a trusting relationship, I met most interviewees several times and stayed in touch with all of them via mail or phone. I have shared drafts of the chapters on the four groups with former group members and got useful feedback for some texts. If interviewees decided at any point of the interview process that they wanted to withdraw from the research project, I respected this decision. While this approach reduced the interview sample, it certainly improved relationships with the participants. After informing them about my project during first informal meetings, I conducted semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews proved
to be a good method for this project, because they allow researchers ‘to record women’s thoughts, beliefs and values employed in the development of feminist theory’ (O’Neill 2003: 341).

The interview process made me aware of a number of constitutive differences between me and my interviewees. On average, they were born 30 or more years before me and grew up in a divided country. Many of them spent years in hiding or in detention. With a few exceptions, they did not identify as feminists and still hold this view. If possible, I tried to meet my interviewees at places that made them feel comfortable. The result was that I met one woman at a small pond in the forest, accompanied another interviewee during a nervous walk along a river, ate home cooked pumpkin soup with one woman in her home, met others in their favourite cafes or at work. With the exception of a focus group with three former members of the Red Zora, all interviews were individual discussions. Most interviewees allowed me to use their real names but did not feel comfortable with a voice recorder. Therefore, all direct references to interviews are based on handwritten notes that I took in the interview process. While interviews offer valuable insights into thoughts, beliefs and values of former members of militant leftist groups, Della Porta rightly argues that the information that these and other internal sources (e.g. autobiographies and group statements) provide ‘follows – consciously or subconsciously – psychological needs […] as well as aesthetic considerations’ (Della Porta 1995: 19). To compare and critically contrast the views of former participants with other perspectives, this thesis draws on scholarly literature (see literature review) and archival material.
Due to archival restrictions in Germany, a great part of the personal data in the Federal archives remains inaccessible to researchers. According to paragraph 5 of the Federal Archives Act, files containing personal information may be used by third persons only 30 years after the death of the person concerned or after the approval of the person concerned. Although many files remained inaccessible and I had to accept lengthy application procedures and month-long processing times, I had the privilege to be one of the first scholars who could work with a range of archival sources from the 1970s. A substantial part of the files used in this thesis have not been accessed by researchers before. In the course of this research project, I collected data in a range of archives, including the ‘Stasi’ archive in Berlin, the federal archives in Koblenz, the ‘Women’s Research and Education Centre’ (FFBIZ) in Berlin, the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (HIS), the feminist archive ‘Frauenmediaturm’ in Cologne, the ‘APO’-archive in Berlin, and the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam.
2. The Red Army Faction

2.1 Introduction

In 1998, members of the ‘Red Army Faction’ declared the end of a 28-year-long armed struggle against the existing political and economic order in the FRG. Years after its last attack, however, the RAF still has the capacity to cause controversy nationwide, a manifestation of what is known to some as Germany’s ‘RAF trauma’\(^{68}\) (Straßner 2008: 209). The 2003 RAF exhibition in Berlin, as well as the release of former group members Brigitte Mohnhaupt (2007) and Christian Klar (2009) from prison, has caused public outcry (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 18). The emotionally charged debates on the occasion of the trial of the former RAF member Verena Becker in 2012 provided the most recent evidence that, as regards the RAF, the Germans have yet to come to terms with the past. Since the early 1970s, journalists, scholars and other authors have both fuelled and critically examined continuing and intense discussion of the RAF. As the literature review in this chapter illustrates, the body of literature about the RAF is huge and grows steadily.

The historian of the RAF Wolfgang Kraushaar rightly argues that ongoing interest in the group cannot be attributed to a single cause, and identifies several important factors. Firstly, to this day no other group in the FRG has fought as long and as fiercely against the existing political order as the RAF. Not only did 26 group members lose their lives in the

\(^{68}\) The notion of the ‘RAF trauma’ goes back to an article that the journalist Ulrich Greiner published in 2007 in the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*. According to Greiner, the contentious debates about the release of Mohnhaupt and Klar and other polemical discussions about the RAF were indicative of an ‘uncured and possibly incurable trauma’ [*ein ungeheiltes, womöglich unheilbares Trauma gibt*] (Greiner 2007).
group’s armed struggle (Kraushaar 2008: 365), but the RAF also killed 34 people and injured many more in dozens of attacks and shootouts with the police (Siemens 2007: 12). Consequently, researchers investigating political violence in West Germany had good reasons to depict the RAF as the biggest internal threat to the West German state (see, e.g. Elter 2008: 82, Kraushaar 2008: 12, Straßner 2008: 208).

In 1977, the British journalist Jilian Becker controversially labelled the RAF ‘Hitler’s children’ (Becker 1977). This name is indicative of a second reason why the group elicits affectively charged debate to this day. The history of the RAF, as Sarah Colvin highlights, ‘is a history of violence and killing that is uncomfortably difficult to separate from another history of violence and killing – the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945’ (Colvin 2009: 8). While RAF members presented themselves as both fighters against and victims of a fascist state, recent scholarship has critically examined the cultivation of these images (see, e.g. Hauser 2006, Schneider 2006). According to Kraushaar, a third reason why the RAF is firmly embedded in the collective memory of the German people is that the group ‘gave terrorism [in Germany] a face’ (Kraushaar 2007a). While this is certainly true, the historian fails to mention that this face was gendered.

The first wanted poster in the history of the RAF featured the journalist Ulrike Meinhof (see Image 2 on the following page). Throughout the history of the RAF, women constituted a significant part of the membership of the RAF. At times, they clearly outnumbered men on the wanted posters (see Image 3 on the following page). By now, it is well known that Meinhof and other women played leading roles in the
militant leftist group. Drawing on previous research on the RAF, archival material and press coverage, this chapter seeks to contribute to a better understanding of female participation in the RAF. Unlike other recent studies on this subject, it does not focus on representations of RAF-women in the media. Rather, it seeks to contribute to the existing body of research by providing an overview of ideology, structure, history and activities of the group that considers both material and discursive aspects.

Image 2: Wanted Poster Ulrike Meinhof (left)
Source: Bielby, Clare, Violent Women in Print: Representations in the West German Print Media of the 1960s and 1970s (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2012), p. 82.

Image 3: Wanted Poster RAF (right)

With the ‘German Autumn’ in 1977, the violent conflict between the RAF and the West German State reached a dramatic peak. ‘The year 1977’, noted cultural theorist Aleida Assmann, ‘entered the history books.
as the year of the RAF’ (Assmann 2007: 137). A tragic chain of events during the German Autumn has become engraved in the public’s collective memory of the RAF. In September 1977, group members abducted the business executive Hanns-Martin Schleyer to enforce the release of the detained RAF founder members, and in early October, Palestinian fighters hijacked a German airplane with 90 passengers to increase the pressure on state and police authorities. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, however, categorically rejected the demands of the kidnappers. When news reached the detained RAF members that special forces had stormed the airplane and liberated all hostages, Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan Carl Raspe were found dead in their prison cells on the morning of 18 October. On the same day, Schleyer was killed by his kidnappers after a 44-day long ordeal.

None of the dramatic events during the German Autumn ‘stirred up more indignation than the murder of the banker Jürgen Ponto’ on 30 July 1977 (Schrep 2007). On that day, Susanne Albrecht – a daughter of Ponto’s friend Hans-Christian Albrecht – paid a visit to the Ponto villa in Hamburg. The young woman brought a bunch of wild roses and was accompanied by a ‘decently dressed’ couple, RAF members Christian Klar and Brigitte Mohnhaupt (Albrecht and Ponto 2011: 21). When Ponto opened the door to welcome the visitors, they threatened him with guns and tried to abduct him. Ponto resisted and was shot by the intruders. Newspaper articles and other public responses to the murder of Jürgen Ponto illustrate that it was not the brutality of the attacks and their fatal

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69 ‘Das Jahr 1977 ist als das Jahr der RAF in die Geschichte der RAF eingegangen.’
70 ‘Kein Anschlag der RAF löste größere Entrüstung aus als der Mord an Jürgen Ponto.’
consequences alone that have made the RAF so terrifying and fascinating. On 2 August 1977, an article entitled ‘Death and the Maiden’ in the conservative newspaper *Die Welt* asked polemically: ‘must “every citizen” worry they might encounter “violent death in the shape of a young girl”?’ (Melzer 2009: 46). Clare Bielby observes that articles in the glossy magazine *Quick* and in *Der Spiegel* were framed in similar ways (Bielby 2012: 110-111). In each case, the media focused on Albrecht’s role in the attack and presented her behaviour as ‘cowardly’ and ‘inhumane’ (ibid.).

In addition to the aspects mentioned by Kraushaar, my discussion identifies and explores another explanation as to why the organisation terrifies and fascinates people to this day: more than any other militant organisation in West Germany, the RAF has been associated with a tactic that I describe as the use of femininity as camouflage: a tactical recourse to femininity. While the murder of Jürgen Ponto brought this tactic to the media’s attention, the attack constituted neither the first nor the last use of femininity as camouflage in the history of the RAF. As the case study in this chapter illustrates, the founding members of the RAF made effective use of feminine accessories and stereotypes as early as 1970. The discussion in this chapter shows that the use of femininity as camouflage neither arose from nor complied with the ideology of the group. Rather, the tactical recourse to femininity in the RAF was the result of situational dynamics and of gendered performances that were only in part conscious.


2.2 Existing Literature and Data Collection

Since the number of publications about the RAF continues to grow quickly across a variety of fields, a comprehensive analysis of the existing body of secondary literature has become a challenging if not impossible enterprise. Rather than trying to provide a detailed discussion of previous publications, the following paragraphs provide a brief overview of internal and external sources\(^{71}\) that were particularly relevant to my discussion of the RAF. Like the authors of other recent work on the RAF (see, e.g. Colvin 2009, Diewald-Kerkmann 2009), I can draw on a range of internal sources that were inaccessible to the authors of previous studies.\(^{72}\) Firstly, a number of texts from the 1970s that were hitherto hard to find or illegal are now online, available in print, or accessible in archives. Such documents include, for instance, theoretical papers and other public statements by the group, as well as the so-called info-letters, which circulated among detained RAF-members and their lawyers, and other prison writings.\(^{73}\) Secondly, a growing number of former group members have decided to share personal memories of the armed struggle with a broader audience since the 1990s. Examples include autobiographies (Schiller 2001, 2011, Viett 1997), interviews (Tolmein and Möller 1997, Wisniewski 1997), and a range of other texts (Holderberg and Berberich

\(^{71}\) For an explanation of the distinction between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ sources, see Chapter 1.

\(^{72}\) With the exception of participants in state-sponsored research projects, scholars could not use data that infringed on the personal rights of German citizens or the statutory period for archival sources, which is 30 years.

\(^{73}\) In 1987, the Dutch RAF-lawyer Pieter H. Bakker Shut edited a first collection of info-letters (Bakker Schut 1987). Although RAF pamphlets have circulated in leftist circles since 1970, a first collection of key texts by the group was not published before 1997 (ID-Verlag (ed.) Rote Armee Fraktion Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der RAF). In recent years, researchers can also work with a number of unpublished documents by members of the RAF that were incorporated into the comprehensive RAF Collection at the IISH in Amsterdam.
Autobiographical accounts by RAF victims form a critical addition to this corpus of literature (see, e.g. Buback 2008, Albrecht and Ponto 2011).

While I believe that autobiographies, group statements and other texts by former RAF members provide valuable insights into the structure, ideology and history of the RAF, I agree with the authors of previous studies that the contents of these subjective accounts must be examined critically (Della Porta 1995: 19, Elter 2008: 89, Colvin 2009: 2). I have therefore followed the approach that Sarah Colvin suggests in her recent study of Ulrike Meinhof and tried to ‘cast the net wide in my selection of materials’ to critically evaluate and contextualise internal accounts (ibid.). Where possible, I have read internal accounts with and against state and police reports from archives, press coverage and scholarly publications. Literary and artistic representations of the RAF have exerted considerable influence on the public debate about political violence in Germany, and were at the heart of a significant part of the existing research on the RAF. Yet this chapter does not discuss films, fictional texts, performances and other artistic representations. Since this approach is unusual for a study in the field of Cultural Studies, I want to clarify it briefly.

Above all, the decision not to consider artistic representations of the RAF was pragmatic. The number of novels and films on the RAF grows quickly. Moreover, many of the artistic presentations of the RAF

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74 In a publication from 2009, the historian Gisela Diewald-Kerkmann mentioned a number of novels on the RAF, including Leander Scholz’ Rosenstolz (2003).
are relatively recent, meaning that to include them would have extended the historical focus of this study considerably. Secondly, artistic and literary representations of the RAF are at the centre of a steadily growing body of research, to which I want to refer interested readers at this point (see, e.g. Berendse 2005, von Stetten 2009, Elsaesser 2007, Tremel 2006, Kreimeier 2006, Preece 2012, Aurélio and Proença 2011, Grigoleit 2011, Danchev 2009, Mazierska 2011, Cooke and Homewood 2011, Hikel and Schraut 2012). Rather than trying to add to this rich corpus of literature, this chapter seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamic relationship between the embodied and situated dynamics during concrete manifestations of violence and the discursive formations that enable, constrain and interpret the gendered performances of perpetrators of violence. In this context, public responses and press coverage from the 1970s are much more relevant than representations in film, art and fiction, because they directly influenced the theory and practice of the group at the time. Hence, this study focuses on material that was directly relevant to political violence in the 1970s.

Journalistic accounts constitute an important resource for this study and for research on the RAF in general. Apart from countless newspaper articles and other media coverage, there are a number of

Christian Delius’ Mogadischu Fensterplatz (1987) and Christoph Hein’s In seiner frühen Kindheit ein Garten (2005) (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 16-17). Berhard Schlink’s novel Das Wochenende from 2008 and other fictional texts could be added to this list. Diewald-Kerkmann also mentioned several documentaries and motion pictures about the RAF or particular members: Margarethe von Trotta’s Die bleierne Zeit (1981), Reinhard Hauff’s Stammheim (1985), Andres Veiel’s Black Box BRD (2001), Christopher Roth’s Baader, Andreas (2002), Klaus Stern’s Andreas Baader (2002), Gerd Conradt’s Starbuck: Holger Meins (2003), and Uli Edel’s internationally successful The Baader Meinhof Complex from 2008 (ibid.). Novels and films are of course not the only artistic representations of the RAF; a range of other art works and events such as the previously mentioned RAF-exhibition in 2005 and Elfriede Jelinek’s stage play Ulrike Maria Stuart, which was performed first in 2006, also fall into this category.
book-length publications on the RAF contemporary to the period. Jilian Becker’s *Hitler’s Children? The Story of the Baader Meinhof Gang* from 1977 and Stefan Aust’s *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex*, which was first published in 1985, constitute two of the earliest and yet most detailed journalistic studies of the formative years of the RAF (Becker 1977, Aust 2008). Even before Aust’s book was made into a film in 2008, the publication had become a ‘legend’ (Wunschik 1997: 20). A number of other journalists and contemporary witnesses have added to the growing body of literature on the RAF and individual group members (see, e.g. Ditfurth 2007, Krebs 1988, Koenen 2004, Overath 1991, Peters 1991, 2004, Winkler 2007, Prinz 2003, Sontheimer 2010). Three publications that are not exclusively concerned with the RAF but are worth mentioning for their focus on female participation in this and other militant groups are Robin Morgan’s *The Demon Lover* (1989), Eileen MacDonald’s *Shoot the Women First* (1991) and Ulrike Edschmid’s *Frau mit Waffe* (2001).

While journalistic publications constitute a valuable – and in some cases the only – source of data, they, too, must be evaluated critically. In order to appeal to a mass audience, some journalists simplify matters and make claims that are sensationalist or simply false. Diewald-Kerkmann rightly criticises that some journalistic publications about the RAF ‘supply no evidence, blur reality and fiction, or flinch from a critical evaluation of the information provided’⁷⁵ (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 13). As highlighted in the previous chapter, a number of recent studies have offered detailed analyses of the constitutive role of the media in the

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⁷⁵ ‘bleiben ohne jeden Beleg, verwischen Wirklichkeit und Fiktion oder entziehen sich einer genaueren Überprüfung der Verlässlichkeit ihrer Angaben’
discourse on terrorism in West Germany (Weinhauer et al. 2006, Balz 2008) and of representations of violent women in this context (Grisard 2011, Bielby 2012). These and other scholarly publications on the RAF can help to evaluate internal sources and media coverage and to analyse the RAF’s armed struggle in the historical and political context of the time.

Scholars from a range of disciplines have contributed to a better understanding of the RAF. Some of the most comprehensive studies of the RAF have been conducted by sociologists and political scientists (see, e.g. Jäger and Süllwold 1981, Baeyer-Katte 1982, Fetscher and Rohrmoser 1981, Langguth 1983, Sack et al. 1984, Della Porta 1995, Wunschik 1997, Waldmann 1998, Rucht and Neidhardt 1999, Kraushaar 2006a, Kailitz 2007, Straßner 2008). Most of these publications draw primarily or exclusively on police and court files as well as on other archival sources. Historians have only recently begun to analyse the armed struggle in West Germany (see, e.g. Diewald-Kerkmann 2009, März 2007, Weinhauer et al. 2006, Varon 2004). The delay in historical scholarship and other fields of research that draw mainly or exclusively on archival sources is related to the archival legislation in Germany (see Chapter 1 for a detailed explanation). Scholars from media studies, literary studies, and Cultural Studies have also made important contributions to the body of research on the RAF (see, e.g. Balz 2008, Colvin 2009, Elter 2008, Giles and Oergel 2003, Stephan and Tacke 2008, Ächtler and Gansel 2010, Bielby 2012, Hikel and Schraut 2012).

The research questions and methodological frameworks of scholarly publications on the RAF vary within and among disciplines. Even the most comprehensive publications such as Wolfgang Kraushaar’s
1500-page long anthology from 2006 cannot cover every moment in the history of the RAF. Most studies focus therefore on a particular aspect such as the ideological background of the RAF, the biographies of particular group members, the RAF’s relationship to the state and to the media, or on a specific historical period. To offer a well-informed and balanced analysis of these and other moments in the history of the RAF, authors draw on a range of internal and external sources – a common approach in the interdisciplinary field of research on political violence and terrorism. Some scholars use empirical or comparative research designs to analyse their sources (Fetscher et al. 1981, Jäger et al. 1981, Della Porta 1995, Varon 2004), others, drawing on Michel Foucault, study discourses on the RAF and on women in the group (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009, Balz 2008, Grisard 2011).

In line with other recent studies (see, e.g.: Colvin 2009, Melzer 2009, Diewald-Kerkmann 2009, Grisard 2011, Bielby 2012), this chapter seeks to contribute to a better understanding of women’s involvement in political violence in West Germany. Previous research on this subject focused on a range of aspects including the role of identity and violence in the work of RAF co-founder Ulrike Meinhof (Colvin 2009), the role of gender in court proceedings against the RAF (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009) and representations of violent women in the media (Bielby 2012). As highlighted in Chapter 1, this study draws on a theoretical framework that emphasises the mutual interdependence of material, biocultural, and symbolic forces in the making of social and political practices. Consequently, it seeks to consider discourses on political violence in the 1970s and 1980s as well as material situations and evolving corporeal
practices. The existing body of research was only of limited help to explore the material and corporeal dimension of political violence. Therefore, in addition to scholarly and journalistic accounts, this chapter draws on autobiographies and prison writing by former group members as well as on data from the Federal Archives in Koblenz, the Institute for Social History in Amsterdam, the Hamburg Institute for Social Research and other archives. Finally, I use information gathered in an interview with former RAF-member Monika Berberich. Although she was not directly involved in Baader’s rescue, she was able to provide important insights into the preparations for the attack discussed in the case study.

2.3 History

Many researchers and journalists distinguish between three ‘generations’ of RAF fighters. The liberation of Andreas Baader in May 1970 marks the beginning of the struggle of the first generation of the RAF. By the mid-1970s, most founding members of the RAF were in prison, and a second generation of fighters emerged. This group was active until the early 1980s. It was followed by a third generation of fighters who carried out their last attacks in the early 1990s. Some authors refute this generational model, arguing it suggests ‘a biological order, coherence and inevitability of terrorism’ (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 14). While I agree that we should neither simplify nor naturalise the complex social fabrics of

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76 Since there is no consensus in previous research on the question of when exactly the armed struggle of the second generation of the RAF began and ended, I have chosen not to specify this period in the group’s history any further.
77 ‘[d]a hierdurch der Eindruck einer biologischen Abfolge, Geschlossenheit und Zwangsläufigkeit von Terrorismus entstehen kann’
militant groups, I think that the distinction between three generations is useful for referring to different yet related phases in the history of the RAF. Women were part of the leading circles of each generation of fighters. However, each generation of the RAF had new members, set its own priorities and made its own mistakes.

As highlighted previously, the rise and decline of the protest movement in the 1960s, the Cold War and other socio-political dynamics were all important for the formation of the RAF. But these specific historical and political developments and ideological mindsets alone cannot explain the birth of the RAF. In fact, the event discussed in the case study was as much a product of situational dynamics as the result of the gradual radicalisation of the group’s founding members. In a prison note from 1973, Ulrike Meinhof acknowledged that ‘the formation of the RAF was [...] spontaneous’78. Like most founding members of the RAF, Meinhof’s background was white Protestant middle-class, and she was university-educated (Jäger and Süllwold 1981: 21, Melzer 2009, Elter 2008: 87, Kraushaar 2006a: 25). Since the early 1970s, journalists, contemporary witnesses, scholars and biographers have speculated about possible reasons why this successful journalist and single mother79 chose to take up arms (see, e.g. Ditfurth 2007: 13, Edschmid 2001: 125, Sontheimer 2010: 15, Winkler 2007: 163). While it is hardly possible to give a definitive answer to this question, the data examined in the case study suggest that Meinhof’s decision to go underground was no

78 ‘Die Bildung der RAF hatte in der Tat spontaneistischen Charakter’ (source: BAK, prison note by Ulrike Meinhof, confiscated by the police in 1973, B362/3134.
79 Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin, two other founding members of the RAF, had children, too. Yet, unlike Meinhof, neither of them had child custody.
voluntary choice. Rather it seems that she and other participants in Baader’s rescue saw themselves as forced to go into hiding after the attack at the Centre for Social Issues [Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Soziale Fragen] had escalated into violence contrary to the original plans.

As the case study illustrates, the founding members of the RAF followed deeds with words rather than turning rhetoric into action. ‘With respect to the history of events’, Wunschik observes, ‘the praxis clearly preceded its theoretical integration and justification’⁸⁰ (Wunschik 1997: 161). The following section provides a more detailed analysis of the theoretical and ideological framework of the RAF. By 1972, less than two years after the group had formed in Berlin, the police had arrested most members. While this meant that they could no longer commit attacks, it did not imply the end of their struggle. Quite the contrary, the founding members of the RAF used the unusual conditions of their detention effectively to gain sympathy and support within and beyond the West German Left and to coordinate the activities of a second generation of fighters (Scheerer 1988: 337).⁸¹

The major goal of the second generation was the liberation of the founding members of the RAF from prison (Straßner 2008: 219). After Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader, Horst Mahler, Ulrike Meinhof, Jan-Carl Raspe and Holger Meins had been arrested, the remaining group took several years to rebuild a functioning structure. Then, however, the RAF

⁸⁰ ‘Damit ging schon ereignisgeschichtlich die Praxis terroristischer Aktivität ihrer theoretischen Einordnung und Rechtfertigung voran’
⁸¹ Intellectuals and leftist activists in France, for instance, showed great interest in and sympathy for the detained founding members of the RAF. Jean-Paul Sartre’s visit in the Stamheim prison and a petition for a more humane treatment of political prisoners signed by prominent intellectuals such as Simone de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault from 1974 document this interest (for a more detailed discussion, see Koenen 2006).
was more belligerent than ever. Not only did the group in 1977 have more fighters than at any other point of its history, it also executed a series of spectacular attacks that peaked in the ‘German Autumn’.\(^8^2\) According to Wunschik, no other militant leftist group in West Germany, including the first and third generation of the RAF, carried out attacks ‘with a similar calculus, brutality and frequency’\(^8^3\) (Wunschik 1997: 13). Brigitte Mohnhaupt and other leading members of the second generation were in close contact with the detained RAF-founders, whose claim to leadership and ideological framework they accepted without qualification. As a result, the second generation of the RAF did not release a theory or strategy paper for years and had, according to a former member, ‘virtually no theoretical debates’\(^8^4\) (Boock quoted in Wunschik 2008: 477). Since the group did not develop a distinct theoretical or political position and as their primary objective was the liberation of their detained comrades, they were quickly mocked in the radical Left as the ‘liberate-the-guerrilla-guerrilla’\(^8^5\) (Teufel 1979). With the death of the last leading members of the first generation in the final days of the ‘German Autumn’, the second generation of the RAF had failed once and for all to achieve this goal. After this fundamental defeat, many group members laid down their arms and went into hiding in the GDR (Wunschik 2008).

To this day, little is known about the third generation of the RAF. The third generation formed in the early 1980s, at a point in time when most founding members of the group were dead. Alexander Straßner

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\(^8^2\) According to Tobias Wunschik, the core of the group consisted in autumn 1977 of exactly 20 members (Wunschik 2006: 472).
\(^8^3\) ‘mit vergleichbarem Kalkül, in ähnlicher Brutalität und in derart kurzer Abfolge’
\(^8^4\) ‘so gut wie null theoretische Diskussion’
\(^8^5\) ‘Befreit-die-Gerilja-Gerilja’
argues that compared to its predecessors, the group was tightly organised and extremely professional. While internationalism had always been an aim of the RAF, the third generation worked more closely with militant groups from European countries than any other generation (cf. Daase 2007). Many of the nine killings and spectacular attacks that the third generation executed between 1985 and 1992 are still unresolved, since the perpetrators left hardly any traces (Straßner 2006: 502). Only the leading circle of the third generation went underground, where it coordinated several ‘fighting units’ of up to 50 people and the activities of hundreds of legal supporters (ibid.: 214). Only Birgit Hogefeld and Wolfgang Grams have so far been identified as part of this leading circle (ibid.: 490). Unlike the founding members of the RAF, the third generation made little effort to justify or contextualise its attacks with theory and ideology. As Straßner highlights, the group held a pragmatic, if not utilitarian, approach to violence (Straßner: 499). The brutality of the third generation of the RAF and its disregard for ideological and theoretical questions increased its isolation from the radical Left. On 20 April 1998, the group declared its own dissolution.

2.4 Ideology

From the very beginning of its armed struggle, the RAF drew on theory and ideology mainly to justify previous activities. Given this recourse to theory, it is hardly surprising that one of the major theoretical principles of the RAF was the ‘primacy of praxis’. According to Fetscher and Rohrmoser, this principle served the RAF as a ‘theory to compensate a
theory-deficit\textsuperscript{86} and worked as a defence against theoretical and political criticism from leftist groups (Fetscher and Rohrmoser 1981: 179). While the group acknowledged its roots in the student movement, it criticised the strong emphasis on theorising within the New Left in West Germany. In the first of four key theory papers, the RAF claimed: ‘Whether the time is right for violent resistance depends on whether it is possible; its possibility can only be discovered with practice’\textsuperscript{87} (RAF 1997: 40). By calling for a ‘primacy of praxis’, the group adapted a guiding principle that had a long history in anarchist theory and politics\textsuperscript{88}, yet the RAF certainly did not identify itself as anarchist and did not want to be labelled as such. In \textit{Das Konzept Stadtguerilla}, the group claimed that a struggle based on the anarchist slogan ‘Macht kaputt was euch kaputt macht’ [destroy what destroys you] would not go far enough. Anarchist forms of resistance, the RAF alleged, lacked the discipline and the class consciousness they deemed indispensable for a revolution (ibid.: 44).

The theoretical and ideological framework of the RAF developed with and in response to the group’s activities and to responses by different social actors including but not limited to groups within the radical left, the State and the media. In a selective manner, the group combined ideological set pieces of Marx, Engels and Lenin with theories espoused by the Black Panthers, Mao Zedong, Frantz Fanon, Carlos Marighella, Che Guevara and other thinkers to contextualise and justify their armed struggle. As the name ‘Red Army Faction’ indicates, the group understood

\textsuperscript{86} ‘Theorie des Theoriedefizits’

\textsuperscript{87} ‘Ob es richtig ist, den bewaffneten Widerstand jetzt zu organisieren, hängt davon ab, ob es möglich ist; ob es möglich ist, ist nur praktisch zu ermitteln’

\textsuperscript{88} For a more detailed discussion of the principle and its use by the RAF, see e.g. Elter 2008, Fetscher and Rohrmoser 1981, Wunschik 1997.
itself as the military wing of a not-yet existing communist party (Kraushaar 2008: 21). The group’s structure reflects this self-conception. Each generation of the RAF was tightly organised, and fighters from lower ranks were expected to execute commands from leading members. Initially, the ideological framework constituted a ‘creative development of orthodox Marxism’89 (Wunschik 1997: 44), yet already the leading ideologists of the first generation of the RAF, Ulrike Meinhof and Horst Mahler, were aware that the differences between workers in affluent countries and in the Third World were too significant to declare the working class as a whole to be the revolutionary subject of their armed struggle (Fetscher and Rohrmoser 1981: 61).

The notion of the revolutionary subject goes back to Karl Marx who identified it with the proletariat. Drawing on Marx, Herbert Marcuse defined the revolutionary subject in 1969 as

that class or group which, by virtue of its function and position in society, is in vital need and is capable of risking what they have and what they can get within the established system in order to replace this system – a radical change which would indeed involve destruction, abolition of the existing system. (Marcuse 1969: 326)

The work of Marcuse and other thinkers of the New Left point to an important theoretical question: can the working classes in advanced industrial countries still be understood as a revolutionary subject in the Marxist sense? Marcuse emphasises that this is the case only if they have ‘the vital need for revolution’ and are ‘capable of at least initiating, if not

89 ‘schöpferische Weiterentwicklung des orthodoxen Marxismus’
carrying through such a revolution’ (ibid.). The first RAF statement from 1970 illustrates that the group wanted to mobilise underprivileged workers, working women and marginalised youths, and other ‘potentially revolutionary elements’ in West Germany (Colvin 2009: 81). The same statement shows that the group placed even greater hopes on workers in the Third World and victims of colonial exploitation.

Soon, the group realised that their attacks mobilised masses neither in West Germany nor in the Third World. Facing a lack of support by the working class, the RAF drew on theories of revolution that did not make proletarian participation a precondition. The group found this theoretical framework in the ‘foco theories’ proposed by Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and Régis Debray. In their detailed analysis of the RAF’s ideology, Iring Fetscher, Herfried Münkler and Hannelore Ludwig highlight that the key point of foco theories is that the guerrilla could create the objective conditions for a revolution (ibid.: 28). According to this theoretical framework, the support of the masses was no longer a crucial precondition for an armed struggle. Rather than fighting with the masses, the RAF claimed that the ‘conscious section of intellectuals and workers’ had to fight as a revolutionary avant-garde, acting both for and before the masses (Die Rote Armee Fraktion 1971).

Throughout the history of the RAF, the armed struggle of the group was also a struggle to find and redefine its revolutionary subject. As mentioned earlier, the founding members of the RAF belonged to a

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90 ‘Foco’ is Spanish for focus. ‘Foco theories’ or focalism is a form of guerrilla warfare that focuses on operations by small and mobile groups of fighters that are supported by larger parts of the population.

91 ‘der bewußte Teil der Arbeiter und Intellektuellen’
generation of Germans who had grown up during or after the war and tried to come to grips with the legacy of the Nazi past, yet it was not only the Holocaust and ‘the parents’ silence about their past’ that raised indignation amongst students and other young people in this generation (Von Dirke 1997: 31). They were also concerned about current events in world politics such as the Vietnam War or the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The founding members of the RAF shared this concern with most in the New Left, but they did not want to leave it at declarations of solidarity. In summer 1970, the nascent group spent several weeks in a military training camp run by the PFLP. Throughout its existence, the RAF sought close alliances with militant Arab groups. After the Munich massacre during the summer Olympic Games in 1972 (see also: discussion in Chapter 1), Mahler and Meinhof openly supported the abduction and killing of Israeli sportsmen by members of the militant Palestinian organisation ‘Black September’ (Jander 2006: 386). In the eyes of the founding members of the RAF, the fatal attack in Munich was a direct contribution to a global struggle against imperialism (ibid.). Jamie Trnka highlights that in the rhetoric of the RAF leaders, material political struggles in the Third World were effectively subordinated ‘to the discursive construction of a Third World space of resistance in which the German revolutionary subject is central to the struggle’s successful resolution’ (Trnka 2003: 317).

92 For a comprehensive analysis of the anti-Semitism of the RAF and other militant leftist groups in West Germany, see e.g. Kraushaar’s essay ‘Antizionimus als Trojanisches Pferd. Zur antisemitischen Dimension in den Kooperationen von Tupamaros West-Berlin, RAF und RZ mit den Palästinensern’ in his previously mentioned anthology Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus (2006).
Soon, the focus of the RAF shifted from anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World to the situation of detained group members in West Germany. The prison conditions of the founding members of the RAF were beyond doubt exceptional. Compared to other prisoners, they faced extreme surveillance and exceptional security measures. Not only the leading circle but also men and women with minor roles in the RAF were repeatedly isolated from other prisoners and monitored 24 hours a day (e.g., Marianne Herzog and Margrit Schiller) (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 185). Yet by identifying themselves as ‘political’ prisoners, the founding members of the RAF actively dissociated themselves from other inmates. Referencing the international conventions, they demanded to be treated as ‘prisoners of war’ [Kriegsgefangene] rather than ordinary criminals (Musolff 2006: 309). Politicians, journalists and police authorities reinforced the perceived state of war by depicting and treating the RAF as enemies of the state.

In detention, the founding members of the RAF increasingly identified and presented themselves as victims of a fascist imperialist state. In a letter from May 1973, Ulrike Meinhof compared the conditions in her isolated prison cell in Cologne to those in the gas chambers in Auschwitz. In a similar vein, Gudrun Ensslin referred to Buchenwald and Auschwitz to describe the situation of detained members of the first generation of the RAF. A hunger strike by detained RAF members in 1975 resulted in Holger Meins’s death from starvation, fuelling resentments against a fascist state in the radical Left. In the eyes of many observers,

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the photograph of the pale and emaciated Meins that circulated in the media shortly after his death evoked images of Nazi concentration camps (Steinseifer 2011: 308). The RAF leaders used deaths of group members efficiently to promote their politics and to recruit new members. When they presented themselves as victims of fascism and imperialism, the detained members of the first generation of the RAF mobilised more people than in any other period of their armed struggle (Schneider 2006: 1337). After the death of the last founding members of the RAF, the group abandoned the idea of an external revolutionary subject and focused all its energy on the liberation of their detained comrades. With this move, the theory and practice of the RAF became entirely self-referential.

Although two of the RAF’s leading theoreticians (Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin) were women, the situation of women in West Germany and in other geo-political contexts was of little interest to the group. In 1970, the founding members of the RAF referred to (working) women in West Germany as potentially revolutionary elements. In 1993, the third generation of the RAF declared that it found inspiration in the women’s movement. In the entire 23 years between these two statements, however, the RAF consistently neglected the woman question. Given the virtual absence of feminist ideas from the ideological frameworks of the RAF, it seems surprising that state and police authorities, journalists and other authors have repeatedly imputed feminist motives to the group.94 The feminist image of the RAF, however, is not the product of a feminist agenda. Rather, it reflected resentments towards the New Women’s

94 For one of the first and most striking examples of such publications, see: Der Baader-Meinhof-Report. Dokumente, Analysen, Zusammenhänge 1972.
Movement in West Germany. Vojin Saša Vukadinović rightly argues that ‘[t]he female RAF member became the negative emblem of women’s liberation, as West German men fearfully imagined it: armed and invisible in the underground, uncompromisingly militant in prison’\(^95\) (Vukadinović 2009: 86).

Before she went underground, Ulrike Meinhof had gained a reputation as ‘one of the first politically-minded campaigners for women’s rights’\(^96\) in West Germany (Seifert 2006: 365). After joining the RAF, however, feminist politics played an increasingly reduced role in her thinking. Domestic violence, sexual abuse, abortion and other central themes in the New Women’s Movement were of no relevance to the RAF, since the group focused exclusively on state repression and violence. In a prison note from 1975, Meinhof dismissed the first militant leftist attack with an explicitly feminist agenda – a bombing at the Federal Court of Justice to protest against the court’s decision on the abortion ban (see case study in Chapter 4) – as naïve and opportunistic. ‘Their action against the Federal Court of Justice was shit, a substitute for the slacking 218-movement, which cannot be revived with such an action; especially because they have chosen the wrong target’\(^97\).

The first generation of the RAF depicted the issue of women’s rights in an orthodox Marxist vein as a ‘side contradiction’, and the following generations of fighters did not challenge this approach. Monika

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\(^95\) ‘Das weibliche RAF-Mitglied wurde zum negativen Emblem der Frauenbefreiung, wie sie sich westdeutsche Männer ängstlich ausmalten: Bewaffnet und unsichtbar im Untergrund agierend, im Gefängnis dann unbeugsam weiterkämpfend’

\(^96\) ‘eine der ersten politisch denkenden Frauenrechtlerinnen’

\(^97\) ‘ihre aktion gegen den BVG war schieße, substitut der abschlaeffenden 218-bewegung, die so nicht hochzukriegen ist. zumal der addressat der falsche war’ (source: HIS, Me, U/008, 003)
Berberich, a former member of the group, elaborated on their gender politics: ‘Even if, in the eyes of Gudrun [Ensslin], women were predestined for guerrilla warfare because they could only fulfil themselves by fighting against dominant beliefs: We were not about the liberation of women, we were about the liberation of humans’\(^98\) (Berberich quoted in Stelzer 2007). Berberich’s statement and other personal accounts by women in the RAF indicate that the group held three problematic assumptions about women’s liberation. Firstly, they were convinced that women had to take up arms to liberate themselves. Secondly, personal accounts by female group members indicate that they felt liberated in the RAF, because they considered themselves equal to men in every way (‘Frauen im Untergrund – “Etwas Irrationales”’ 1977: 25, Schiller 2001: 45-46, Tolmein and Möller 2005: 68-69, Ensslin et al. 2005: 138). Thirdly, it seems that women in the RAF were convinced that a revolution would miraculously do away with all forms of oppression including sexism and racism. However, neither the perceived gender equality within the illegal group nor the utopian vision of a post-revolutionary world without gender norms had practical value for interactions in the existing social world. As the following section illustrates, the gendered tactics of women in the RAF often stood in flagrant contradiction to their ideas about gender equality.

\(^{98}\) ‘Auch wenn Gudrun [Ensslin] die Frauen als prädestiniert für die Guerilla ansah, weil sie sich nur gegen die herrschenden Vorstellungen verwirklichen können: Es ging uns nicht um die Befreiung der Frauen, sondern um die Befreiung der Menschen’


2.5 Activities

As the RAF operated mostly underground, the group had to spend a considerable part of its time, energy and financial resources on logistics. To maintain the group’s complex infrastructure, members had to rob banks, obtain forged documents, rent secret flats and organise cars and weapons. In addition to these basic activities, each generation of the RAF set its own priorities. Attacks by the first generation focused on the West German state and its representatives. Prior to their arrest in 1972, members of the first generation killed seven and hurt dozens of people with bombs and firearms. Even in prison, they were involved in the planning of attacks, although they had to leave it to others to execute them. As mentioned previously, the primary aim of the second generation was the liberation of their detained comrades. To achieve this aim, the group killed more people than any other generation of the RAF. Their successors focused on the assassination of national and international policy-makers and businessmen. The third generation of the RAF killed ten people and hurt many more (Trinius 2007). In the course of its armed struggle, the RAF killed 34 people – more than any other militant leftist group in West Germany.

The RAF drew on a range of tactics to prepare and execute attacks. The group did not shy away from direct confrontations. On a number of occasions, masked and heavily armed group members robbed banks and carried out targeted assassinations. The group used a range of weaponry, including pistols, rifles, hand grenades, car bombs and other explosives. Like Carlos Marighella’s ‘urban guerrilla’, the members of the RAF sought
to blend in with the material and social environment in which they operated, in order to prepare attacks without being discovered. Ulrike Edschmid describes this camouflage in her account of Astrid Proll’s life as follows:

When she arrived in Berlin, it was important to stick out. They wanted to provoke and expressed with clothes where they belonged. Now their clothes had to again express where they had come from without showing where they wanted to be. The bourgeois milieu, with which they were familiar, became a protective sphere.\(^9\) (Edschmid 2001: 130)

It seems that some group members enjoyed this bourgeois camouflage more than others. Apparently Baader gloried in presenting himself as a bourgeois dandy (Wieland 2005: 83), while Astrid Proll remained a ‘difficult case’ (Edschmid 2001: 131). Proll was a lesbian who had rebelled against conventional gender norms from an early age and was reluctant to embrace her new role.

Throughout its history, the RAF used femininity as camouflage. The case study in the following section discusses the first tactical recourse to femininity in the history of the RAF during the liberation of Andreas Baader in 1970. While the case study reveals that the gendered performances of Baader’s liberators were above all the result of situational dynamics and unconscious acts, there is evidence that the RAF soon began to use feminine traits and accessories in a more systematic

\(^9\) ‘Als sie [...] nach Berlin gekommen war, war es wichtig gewesen, aufzufallen. Sie wollten provozieren und drückten durch Kleidung aus, wohin sie gehörten. Jetzt musste [...] ihre Kleidung [...] wieder ausdrücken, woher sie kamen, ohne das sichtbar wurde, wohin sie wollten. Das bürgerliche Milieu, das sie kannten, sollte ihr Schutz werden’
manner. In 1977, the use of femininity as camouflage generated huge media interest. As highlighted previously, few attacks in the history of the RAF have terrified and fascinated people in Germany as much as the killing of Jürgen Ponto in July 1977 by members of the second generation of the RAF with ‘guns and roses’. In a cover story about women and violence in early August, the news magazine Der Spiegel used the Ponto murder as an opportunity to report on – and speculate about – female participation in the RAF and other militant leftist groups (‘Frauen im Untergrund – “Etwas Irrationales”’ 1977). Like other newspapers and magazines in the 1960s and 1970s, Der Spiegel contrasted images of women in Ponto’s mourning family and other victims with photographs of ‘terrorist girls’ in the RAF and other militant groups (for a detailed discussion of this aspect, see Bielby 2012). The article highlighted not only that women played leading roles in the RAF and in concrete manifestations of political violence; it also included a number of pictures to illustrate how they used feminine accessories and features to prepare and execute attacks. One photograph displayed the contents of a handbag that the police had confiscated during the arrest of the RAF-member Monika Berberich: a wallet, a pair of sunglasses, a revolver and ammunition.

Another image on the same page featured a weapon that became known as the RAF ‘baby bomb’. Designed by an artist associated with the RAF, the police found the baby bomb in 1972 in an arms depot and confiscated it before the RAF got a chance to use it. Among photographs of other confiscated weapons, the annual report by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution about the year 1972 included several
photographs of the weapon, which they presented as the ‘baby bomb’ of the RAF (Verfassungsschutz 1972 1973). For demonstration purposes, one image showed a female police officer who had strapped the bomb around her waist. Due to its design, the bomb allowed fighters to pass as pregnant women when smuggling explosives into buildings. Once they had placed the bomb at the target site, they could replace their ‘pregnancy belly’ with an air cushion (see Image 4). When first released, the images of the baby bomb received hardly any attention. The Ponto murder, however, created a huge stir that revived interest in the baby bomb and other (ab)uses of feminine features and accessories by women in the RAF. Women – mothers and mothers-to-be in particular – are traditionally understood as caring, nurturing and life-giving. With the baby bomb, the RAF wanted to use these associations to carry out fatal attacks.

**Image 4: RAF Baby Bomb.**

While the RAF used femininity as camouflage throughout its history, this tactic is particularly strongly associated with the second generation of fighters. One month after Susanne Albrecht, Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Christian Klar had killed Jürgen Ponto, a similar incident made national headlines. On 5 September 1977, group members ambushed the president of the German Employer’s Federation, Hanns-Martin Schleyer, on his way from his office to his flat in Cologne. The group blocked the road with a car, forcing Schleyer’s driver Heinz Marcisz to stop. Marcisz, Schleyer’s bodyguard and two police officers died in a hail of more than 130 bullets that hit their cars in the following two minutes (Winkler 2007: 313). The RAF members involved left with Hanns-Martin Schleyer, the only survivor of the attack. At the crime scene the kidnappers left behind a pram, which they had used to store weapons. On 11 September, ‘image of the week’ in the newspaper Die Welt featured this pram. The corresponding article referred to the perpetrators as diabolic and fascist ‘masters of cold-blooded heartlessness’ (quoted in Bielby 2012: 29). Clare Bielby convincingly argues that the ‘pram carrying weapons and the woman terrorist who bears a bomb are visual demonstrations of the supposed paradox of women taking rather than giving life’ (ibid.).

The use of femininity as camouflage by women in the RAF, however, was not limited to the roles of mother or mother-to-be. On 7 August 1985, the 21-year old American soldier Edward Pimental was found dead in a piece of woodland on the outskirts of Wiesbaden. The young man was last seen shortly before his death. According to eye witnesses, he left a bar with a young German woman, who had promised him ‘drugs or love or both’ (‘Der P-Man’ 1985). The woman was later
identified as RAF member Birgit Elisabeth Hogefeld. She and Pimental went to a small forest, where other group members were waiting. The group killed Pimental and stole his ID card. On the following day, 8 August 1985, the RAF used the card to access the grounds of the US-air base in Frankfurt, where they parked a car containing explosives. The car bomb killed two people and wounded 23 (Trinius 2007). The bombing in general and the Pimental murder in particular were the subjects of extensive criticism from the radical Left and also from detained RAF members (Kraushaar 2008: 363). In the 1990s, Hogefeld distanced herself from the RAF and condemned the shooting of Pimental (Hogefeld 1996).

To shed more light on the use of femininity as camouflage by women in the RAF, the case study analyses the first event of this kind in the history of the group.

2.6 Case Study: The Liberation of Andreas Baader in 1970

2.6.1 The Context

Peters 1991, Sontheimer 2010) have also claimed that Baader’s rescue constituted a watershed in the history of the armed struggle in Germany, yet they offer only anecdotal accounts of this event.

This case study seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis of the events that took place on 14 May and of public reactions to Baader’s rescue. The discussion draws on unpublished testimonies (provided by the Institute for Social Issues, Berlin), a bill of indictment against some of the actors involved by the Public Prosecutor Hans-Dieter Nagel (found at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam), and personal files from the Federal Archives, Koblenz. In addition to these sources, the case study draws on autobiographical accounts by former group members Astrid Proll and Monika Berberich, press coverage collected at the newspaper department of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin and secondary literature.

The focus of the discussion is on the gendered performances of the actors involved and how these were perceived in the media and in court. While legal authorities have depicted the appearance of the female perpetrators as a form of ‘poor disguise’, the data examined in this case study suggests that it constituted the first use of femininity as camouflage in the history of the RAF.

‘The birth of the Red Army Faction’, as Jeremy Varon emphasises, ‘was both slow and sudden’ (Varon 2004: 62). It was slow, because the founding members of the RAF did not radicalise overnight. Before participating in Baader’s rescue, most of the perpetrators had been actively involved in the student and protest movement in West Germany.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, discussions about violence in these
movements intensified in the late 1960s as a response to police repression during demonstrations and polemical attacks in the media. Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader\textsuperscript{100}, two key figures in the first ‘generation’ of the RAF, were among the first people in the radical Left in West Germany to carry out a politically motivated arson attack.

Together with two acquaintances, Horst Söhnlein and Thorwald Proll, the 28-year-old student Ensslin and her 25-year-old lover Baader started fires in two department stores in Frankfurt am Main in the night of 2 April 1968. Shortly after the arson attack, the police arrested all four perpetrators. After a few months in jail and a spectacular court case, they were sentenced to three years in prison in October 1968 (Winkler 2007: 127). One of the lawyers defending the arsonists was the 32-year-old Horst Mahler, who – after playing an active role in violent protests in Berlin – was charged with different crimes himself (Jander 2006: 379). In detention, Ensslin gave an interview to the 34-year-old journalist Ulrike Meinhof.\textsuperscript{101} Apparently, the writer was impressed by Ensslin and considered her a ‘partner in thought’ [Partnerin im Denken] (Seifert 2006: 366). Due to an appeal on points of law, Baader, Ensslin, Söhnlein and Proll were temporarily released in June 1969. Restored to freedom, the couple started to work in a social project with young people in Frankfurt am Main. However, in November of the same year the Federal Court of Justice refused the appeal, which meant that the four

\textsuperscript{100} For a detailed discussion of Baader’s and Ensslin’s biographies and their intimate relationship, see Koenen 2004.

\textsuperscript{101} Compared to other group members, Ulrike Meinhof has certainly attracted the most attention from journalists and scholars. An in-depth discussion of her life and work goes beyond the scope of this chapter but can be found elsewhere (see e.g.: Krebs 1988, Prinz 2003, Ditfurth 2007, Colvin 2009).
perpetrators had to spend up to 22 months more in prison (Bressan and Jander 2006: 413).

Söhnlein and Proll followed the demand note by the Federal Court of Justice and surrendered themselves to the police. Ensslin and Baader, however, refused to serve the rest of their sentence and went underground. This choice implied for both a radical break with their previous lives but also with legality and society as a whole (Bressan and Jander 2006: 414). After travelling for several weeks in France and Italy, Baader and Ensslin returned – accompanied by Thorwald Proll’s sister Astrid – to Germany. In March 1970, they moved into Ulrike Meinhof’s flat in Berlin. There, the couple joined forces with Mahler, who was as keen as Baader and Ensslin to found a militant underground organisation. According to Proll, then a 20-year-old student, the group consisted in spring 1970 of six or seven people and was dominated by women (Edschmid 2001: 123-125). Their first efforts to form an organisation based on the model of the Latin American urban guerrilla in Berlin, however, ended abruptly when Baader was arrested on 4 April 1970 (Jander 2006: 381).102

Soon after Baader’s arrest, Ensslin and Mahler began to make plans for his liberation. In Proll, Meinhof, the medical student Ingrid Schubert, Mahler’s apprentice Monika Berberich, and Irene Goergens, they found five women who were willing to assist in Baader’s rescue. In an

102 Baader was arrested when he and Mahler tried to find a secret weapons dump in a cemetery in Berlin–Buckow that Peter Urbach, an undercover agent for the Federal Office for the Constitution, had mentioned to them. According to Martin Jander and other authors, the police had not yet confirmed Baader’s identity when Mahler made the naïve mistake of calling to ask for the whereabouts of Andreas Baader (Jander 2006: 382; see also: Peters 1991: 74; Koenen 2004: 273). However, it should be added that Urbach’s own account as quoted in a BKA-report does not confirm this anecdote ([Der Baader-Meinhof-Report. Dokumente, Analysen, Zusammenhänge 1972: 26-28].
autobiographical note, Proll noted: ‘[a]fter Baader was arrested while trying to procure arms, I had no doubts whatsoever that I would be part of an action to free him’ (Proll 2004: 11). While they were willing to assist in Baader’s rescue, Proll, Meinhof and others in the loosely connected group around Ensslin and Mahler were not ready to burn all bridges and to go underground. As we shall see, the liberation of the prisoner developed a momentum of its own; one participant shot a civilian, and the entire group had to go into hiding.

Due to the unexpected turn of events during the attack, Baader’s rescue changed the life of the participants once and for all. More than 30 years after the attack, Proll described this turn of events as follows: ‘After a man had been severely injured during the liberation of Baader (we had hired a so-called expert, a criminal who started shooting at once) we found ourselves on wanted-lists with arrest warrants out on all of us’ (Proll 2004: 11). Before the founding members of the Red Army Faction had agreed on a joint approach to violence, even before they had come up with a name for their group, they found themselves in the difficult situation of having to justify the shooting of a civilian. This development confirms two claims about the complex relationship between theory and practice in the history of the RAF that I have mentioned earlier: 1) theoretical reflections did not precede but followed actions; 2) from the first moment in the history of the RAF, the group used theory and ideology selectively to justify deliberate and unanticipated developments during attacks.
2.6.2 The Attack

Since Gudrun Ensslin was still wanted by the police for arson, she could not contact Baader openly. Ulrike Meinhof, however, had no criminal record and was a respected journalist. She requested to meet the prisoner in the Institute for Social Issues to do literary research for a co-authored book about marginalised adolescents (Nagel 1970: 37-41). The governor of the prison in Berlin Tegel refused this request at first but gave his consent after an intervention by Horst Mahler (ibid.: 41-46). It was, after all, not exceptional for detainees to participate in activities outside prison under the surveillance of police officers. According to an unofficial report, 1012 detainees from prisons in Berlin were escorted to external events in 1969, and only nine of them attempted to escape (Der Baader-Meinhof-Report. Dokumente, Analysen, Zusammenhänge 1972: 36). In the weeks prior to the excursion to the library, Baader received visitors on an almost daily basis. Not only Meinhof but also Mahler and his apprentice Monika Berberich came several times to see the prisoner. Even Ensslin visited Baader, using a pseudonym (Nagel 1970: 35-36).

In a routine stop-and-search operation at 2.20 am on 12 May, police officers verified the identity of two women exploring the neighbourhood of the Institute: one of them turned out to be Meinhof and the other, who identified herself as ‘Dr. Gretel Weitemeier’, was probably Ensslin (ibid.: 48-49). On 13 May, Meinhof paid a short visit to the library and asked if the material she had requested for the following day was available. Goergens, Proll and Schubert were also actively involved in the preparations for Baader’s liberation. The young women purchased a gun, which was used in the attack (ibid.: 44-45). Moreover, not only Meinhof
but also Schubert and Goergens visited the Institute for Social Issues on 13 May. They wore wigs and registered in the library under fake names. The two women claimed to be doing research on therapies for criminal youths and began to go through subject-related publications in the reading room. Before leaving, Goergens and Schubert informed employees of the Institute that they would continue their work on the following day (ibid.: 49).

At 9.45 am on 14 May, Baader arrived in the library in the company of two male police officers. Meinhof awaited him with the documents she had requested in the reading room (ibid.: 53). In an internal report, a librarian stated that he found nothing suspicious about the guests. According to the employee of the Institute, the ‘pale’ [blasse] prisoner looked ‘very harmless’ [sehr harmlos] and smoked a lot (Schneider 1970: 2). In front of the reading room, he noticed ‘two young girls, who [...], if I remember rightly, wore green glasses, who seemed strangely nervous and stressed, and who both had a notably large bag next to them at all times’\textsuperscript{103} (ibid.: 1). The ‘nervous girls’ were Goergens and Schubert, who pretended to continue their literature research in the reading room. They were told by employees of the Institute that they should wait in the entrance hall for as long as Baader and Meinhof were working in the reading room (Nagel 1970: 56).

At about 11 am, the young women took guns out of their bag and opened the front door for a third intruder. This person was of male sex and wore a balaclava that showed only his eyes (ibid.: 57-59). Initially, the

\textsuperscript{103} ‘zwei junge Mädchen, [...] die, wenn ich mich recht erinnere, beide grüne Brillen trugen, beide merkwürdig nervös und abgespannt wirkten, und beide eine auffällend große Tasche ständig neben sich hatten’
police suspected that the man was the artist and journalist Peter Homann, a friend of Meinhof's. Later investigations, however, revealed that the third intruder was the 31-year-old mechanic Hans-Jürgen Bäcker. Attracted by the noise in the entrance hall, Georg Linke – the door attendant at the Institute – entered the scene. Without any warning, the man in the balaclava fired at him at close range, seriously wounding the 62-year old (ibid.: 59). The armed intruders proceeded to storm the reading room, where they attacked the two surprised police officers. The masked man disabled one of Baader’s guards by shooting him in the face with a gas pistol (ibid.: 61). The other police officer struggled with Schubert, but she managed to get away and escaped with the other group members through a window into the garden behind the library (ibid.: 62-63). Proll waited for them in a stolen car near the Institute, in which the group drove away (ibid.: 64).

Only a few hours after the attack, the police issued an arrest warrant for Meinhof. She was charged with attempted murder and the liberation of a prisoner. Both of these crimes were said to have been committed in complicity with at least two other perpetrators. The police authorities chose not to specify the sex of the other participants in the attack in the arrest warrant or in other documents that they released immediately after the attack. It seems, however, that they quickly realised that women had greatly outnumbered men among Baader’s liberators. Allegedly, one of the first police officers to arrive at the Institute for Social

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104 Ten months after Baader’s rescue, the leading prosecutor Nagel informed the public during the fifth day of the trial against Mahler, Goergens and Schubert that Bäcker, not Homann, had been involved in the attack (Schultz 1971).
Issues on the day of the attack said: ‘It seems that we are dealing primarily with a “ladies squad”’\textsuperscript{106} (Der Baader-Meinhof-Report. Dokumente, Analysen, Zusammenhänge 1972: 38).

Shortly after the attack, the police initiated a thorough search that, since the armed intruders were not yet identified, focused on the only known participant in the attack: Ulrike Meinhof. Shortly after the liberation of Andreas Baader, the Chief Public Prosecutor authorised a nationwide search with a 10,000 deutschmark (DM) reward for information leading to the arrest of Ulrike Meinhof – the first instance of such a reward being offered in Germany since WWII (Peters 1991: 81). A number of biographical and journalistic accounts indicate that Meinhof had not intended to play an active role in Baader’s rescue and took the decision to escape with the rest of the group only in the heat of the moment (Edschmid 2001: 125, Ditfurth 2007: 13, Winkler 2007: 163, Sontheimer 2010: 15). Regardless of all situational and unintentional dynamics during Baader’s rescue, the police investigations after the attack focused at first almost exclusively on Meinhof. The journalist was now pursued for attempted murder, and her name and face featured prominently on wanted posters on advertising pillars throughout West Germany.

One of the first things that Meinhof and Baader did after the escape from the Institute for Social Issues was therefore to change their outward appearance. According to the journalist Michael Sontheimer, a friend of Meinhof’s cut Baader’s hair and helped other group members to change their appearance (ibid.: 19). Meinhof also tried to change her

\textsuperscript{106} ‘Es scheint, wir haben es hauptsächlich mit einer Damenriege zu tun’
looks with makeup and a range of hairstyles (see Images 5 and 6). Apparently, she began to wear a wig after the raid (Edschmid 2001: 126). One reason why Baader, Meinhof and Ensslin were not arrested before June 1972 was certainly that they continued to alter their disguise throughout their period in hiding. Months after the attack, journalists asked the Security Chief Günter Nollau why the leading members of the RAF were – much to the embarrassment of the police – still on the run. According to Nollau, fashion at the time – and the popularity of wigs in particular – constituted a great advantage for the group. ‘The wig is an element’, claimed Nollau, ‘that makes all cats look gray’107 (‘Löwe los’ 1971: 26).

Image 5: Police Handouts on Ulrike Meinhof 1972 (left)

Image 6: Photograph consfiscated during Ulrike Meinhof’s arrest (right)
Source: BAK, Kriminalakte Ulrike Meinhof, M-157.018.

Apart from Ulrike Meinhof, the individuals who were most likely involved in the preparation and execution of Baader’s liberation were Horst Mahler, Gudrun Ensslin, Ingrid Schubert, Irene Goergens, Hans-Jürgen

107 ‘Die Perücke ist ein Element das alle Katzen grau macht’
Bäcker and Astrid Proll. It remains an open question whether Monika Berberich should also be included in this list. While Mahler’s apprentice was not directly involved in the attack, police suspected that the future RAF member functioned as a messenger for the group during her visits in prison. However, the state authorities were not able to prove that Berberich knew about the group’s plan to liberate the prisoner prior to the attack (Nagel 1970: 88-89). Police investigations left little doubt that Goergens, Schubert and Bäcker were among the perpetrators. Moreover, there is evidence that Ensslin also played an active role in the attack (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 3). Since Mahler, by contrast, did not participate in Baader’s liberation, the ratio of women and men among the perpetrators can be calculated at around five to one. Given that women greatly outnumbered men among the participants in Baader’s rescue and that they used feminine accessories such as handbags, wigs, and fashionable clothing to prepare the attack unnoticed, I was surprised to find that politicians, journalists and legal authorities ignored or misrepresented and misunderstood the gendered performances of the actors involved.

### 2.6.3 Public Responses

Across party lines, politicians condemned the rescue in the strongest terms. During a press conference on 14 May, the Senator for Justice in

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108 An arrest warrant from 14 May 1970 described Gudrun Ensslin as ‘a leading member of the [Baader-Meinhof] gang, who was already involved in the joint liberation of her accomplice Baader from prison’ [‘zu den Rädelsführern der Bande und war bereits an der gemeinsamen Befreiung des Mitbeschuldigten B a a d e r aus der Strafanstalt beteiligt’] (source: BAK, 19 May 1971, B 131/168 E- 44.404).
Berlin, Hans-Günter Hoppe, referred to the event as ‘unique in the post-war period’\textsuperscript{109} (Hoppe quoted in ‘APO-Brandstifter mit Waffengewalt befreit’ 1970). Günter Dach, vice-president of the Christian Democrat CDU, blamed the Social Democrat government in Berlin for this and other attacks by an increasingly violent and ‘organised mob’ [organisierter Mob] (Dach quoted in ‘Entsetzen in Berlin’ 1970). The Social Democrats, however, made clear that they did not want to be associated with Baader’s rescue. The Social Democrats, said Chancellor Willy Brandt, had tolerated radical political positions in West Germany, but could only keep on doing so if there was a common refusal of ‘gangster methods’ [Gangster Methoden] as a means of politics (‘10000 DM Belohnung für das Ergreifen der Täter von Dahlem’ 1970). Kurt Neubauer, also a member of the Social Democratic party and, at the time, mayor of Berlin, similarly rejected the attack, but in stronger terms: ‘I am dismayed about the brutality with which they have liberated Andreas Baader. We will not and must not accept that anarchists commit acts of open terror in an increasingly unvarnished manner’\textsuperscript{110} (‘Entsetzen in Berlin’ 1970). The Young Socialists also deemed the brutality of Baader’s rescue unjustifiable and cautioned against judging all people with alternative political views based on the activities of a small group within this diverse spectrum (‘Maskierte Täter eröffneten sofort das Feuer und verletzten Angestellten Lebensgefährlich’ 1970). Indeed, most organisations associated with the New Left quickly distanced themselves from Baader’s liberators, and even

\textsuperscript{109} ‘in der Nachkriegszeit einmaliger Vorgang’

\textsuperscript{110} ‘Ich bin bestürzt über die Brutalität der Verbrecher, mit der sie Andreas Baader befreiten. Wir wollen und dürfen nicht zusehen, dass die Anarchisten immer ungeschminkter ihren offenen Terror ausüben’
radical leftist groups criticised the use of violence against a helpless civilian (Bressan and Jander 2006: 415).

Articles published in local and national newspapers in the first days after Baader’s rescue univocally emphasised the exceptionality and brutality of the attack.111 Journalists present the liberation of the prisoner as a ‘carefully prepared gangster strike’. In line with the police reports, they did not specify whether the perpetrators were male or female. Most journalists referred to the group as ‘gangsters’, ‘masked perpetrators’ [maskierte Täter], ‘armed terrorists’ [bewaffnete Terroristen], ‘wig wearers’ [Perückenträger], and, particularly creatively, as ‘Beatle haircuts’ [Pilzköpfe]. The focus of most reports, however, was not on the armed intruders and their behaviour during the attack. Rather, journalists speculated about the political and ideological background of Baader and Meinhof. Accounts in conservative and right wing newspapers in particular, framed Baader as ‘APO arsonist’ – a label that misleadingly associated the APO as a whole with arson and presented Baader as a member of the extra parliamentary opposition.112

Unlike Baader’s arson in 1968, Meinhof’s role in his rescue in 1970 required explanation, at least in the eyes of many journalists. Most articles presented Meinhof as a radical leftist author-activist. Some reports, however, attacked her on a more personal level. A BILD article, for instance, claimed that Meinhof’s personality changed due to brain surgery in 1962. The author noted that ‘Ulrike – who had always been

111 My discussion is based on a sample of 57 articles that were published in local and national newspapers about Baader’s rescue and the successive trial of Mahler, Goergens and Schubert (see Appendix for list of articles).

112 While Baader participated in a number of protests and demonstrations, biographical accounts argue that he was known neither as a committed leftist theorist nor as an activist (see, e.g.: Koenen 2004: 106–113, Wieland 2005: 67).
intelligent but highly nervous and very erratic – was afterwards often absentminded. In addition to her clumsy choice of dress, she began to look unkempt\(^\text{113}\) (Horst 1970). Not only did the journalist pathologise Meinhof, he also depicted her as an unpredictable woman who let herself go after her divorce. In addition, this article and several other reports depoliticised Meinhof’s participation in the attack by suggesting that she had acted out of love for her ‘fiancé’ Baader (see, e.g. ‘Ruf nach mehr Härte in Berlin’ 1970). These and other personal attacks against Meinhof in the German media confirm Diewald-Kerkmann’s claim that authors presented her behaviour as irrational and pathological (see literature review in Chapter 1).

Two recent studies have shown that Meinhof was neither the first nor the last woman who, allegedly, ‘let herself go’ and resorted to violence because of romantic feelings for a man. Based on an empirical analysis of articles in several major newspapers in West Germany between 1970 and 1977, Hanno Balz concludes that journalists tended to pathologise and sexualise women in the RAF and, at least initially, in particular Meinhof and Ensslin (Balz 2008: 198-231). However, Balz rightly emphasises that the association of female criminality with deviant forms of femininity and sexuality did not emerge with female participation in the armed struggle but can be traced back much further in history (ibid.: 202). In her comprehensive study of representations of violent women in the West German press in the 1960s and 1970s, Clare Bielby comes to a similar conclusion. She finds that the image of the ‘terrorist woman’ in the media

\(^{113}\) ‘Hinterher war Ulrike – stets schon hochnervö-s-intelligent und ungeheuer sprunghaft – häufig ‘abwesend’. Zu ihrem Ungeschick, sich anzuziehen, kam ein leichter Touch zur Ungepflegtheit’
served ‘to pathologize, feminize, and hence to discredit left-wing political violence per se’ and helped ‘the West German state to construct and maintain itself as rational and masculine’ (Bielby 2012: 96). However, on the basis of ‘the high-profile case surrounding the nonpolitically violent Vera Brühne, charged with incitement to murder in 1962’, Bielby illustrates that ‘female empowerment was causing anxiety and gender trouble long before terrorist violence and the women’s movement captured the public imagination’ (ibid.: 3).

Baader’s liberators did not comment on the attack until June 1970. On 5 June, they published a short statement in the radical leftist magazine *Agit 883*. Rather than admitting possible mistakes, the group attacked their critics on the Left. ‘We don’t need to explain the liberation of Baader to any chattering intellectuals or know-alls, shitting their pants in fear; we need to explain it to the potentially revolutionary elements in the people [...], the ones who will get it right away because they are themselves held captive’114 (Die Rote Armee Fraktion 1970: 6, translation by Colvin 2009: 81). The group acknowledged that Baader’s rescue had been the first armed attack by a leftist group in West Germany, but they emphasised that it constituted only one of many manifestations of revolutionary violence all over the world. Instead of reconciling critical voices in the New Left, Baader’s liberators claimed that they wanted to fight for and with the German working class and revolutionary groups all

114 ‘Die Baader-Befreiungs-Aktion haben wir nicht den intellektuellen Schwätzern, den Hosenscheißern, den Alles-besser-Wissern zu erklären, sondern den potentiell revolutionären Teilen des Volkes [...], die die Tat sofort begreifen können, weil sie selbst Gefangene sind’
over the globe. They declared that their aim was to build a ‘Red Army’ to fight for these marginalised and oppressed groups.

Shortly after this first declaration, the weekly news magazine Der Spiegel published a second statement by the founding members of the RAF. The article included excerpts of an interview given by Baader’s liberators to the French journalist Michèle Ray. In this conversation, Meinhof compared their armed struggle to that of the Black Panthers in the US. She argued that police officers were ‘pigs’ [the RAF commonly used the English term], and that they could therefore be shot. According to this statement, the group had liberated Baader for three reasons. Firstly, they considered Baader an essential ‘cadre’. Secondly, they wanted to mobilise the potentially revolutionary parts of the working class. Thirdly, they wanted to prove that their urban guerrilla group should be taken seriously (Meinhof 1970: 74). Shortly after the interview with Ray, Baader’s liberators left the country. Since they spent several weeks in a military training camp run by the Palestinian El-Fatah movement, they could hardly follow the heated debate that their open call for violence provoked in West Germany in the following weeks.¹¹⁵

The RAF did not release another statement until April 1971. In Das Konzept Stadtguerilla [The Concept of the Urban Guerrilla], the author – most probably Meinhof – claimed that Ray had betrayed them and misrepresented their position. Moreover, she emphasised that they had not intended to hurt a civilian during Baader’s rescue. Meinhof insisted: ‘[t]he frequently asked question of whether we would have liberated a

¹¹⁵ For a detailed description of the military training, see e.g. Peters 1991: 84 ff, Sontheimer 2010: 41ff.
prisoner, if we had known that a certain Linke would be shot, can only be answered with no” (RAF 1971). Although the RAF indirectly admitted that Baader’s rescue had been a mistake, Meinhof dismissed critical questions as ‘pacifist, platonic, moralising and disinterested’ (ibid.). Rather than facilitating dialogue and reconciliation with other groups, the first three RAF statements increased the isolation of Baader’s liberators in the New Left. As the discussion on the ideology of the RAF in this chapter illustrates, the group responded to its growing isolation with a reconfiguration of their idea of the revolutionary subject; rather than on the mobilisation of potentially revolutionary elements in the people, they focused increasingly on the liberation of detained group members.

2.6.4 The First Trial Against Members of the RAF

Almost five months after the attack in the Institute for Social Issues, an unknown informant reported a secret RAF flat in Berlin, and the police claimed their first victory in the search for Baader’s liberators. On 8 October, police officers arrested Horst Mahler, Ingrid Schubert, Monika Berberich, Irene Goergens and Brigitte Asdonk (Jander 2006: 384). Even though he had not actively participated in Baader’s rescue, Mahler dominated the press coverage of the successive trial, which came to be known as the ‘Mahler trial’ even before the authorities had published any details about the trial (‘Mahler-Prozeß im Frühjahr’ 1970). Journalists referred to Goergens, Schubert and the other women who had been

116 ‘Die Frage, ob die Gefangenenbefreiung auch dann gemacht worden wäre, wenn wir gewußt hätten, daß ein Linke dabei angeschossen wird – sie ist uns oft genug gestellt worden – kann nur mit Nein beantwortet werden’
117 ‘pazifistisch, platonisch, moralisch, unparteiisch’
arrested on that day as Mahler’s ‘girls’ or even more suggestively as ‘Mahler-Harem’ (Kummer 1970).

On 15 December 1970, the prosecution pressed charges against Goergens, Schubert and Mahler (‘Anklage wegen Befreiung Andreas Baaders erhoben’ 1970). The two young women were charged with the possession of weapons and attempted murder in combination with the liberation of a prisoner. Mahler was also charged with the possession of a firearm. The prosecution further sought to prove that Mahler had knowingly assisted Baader’s liberators (Nagel 1970: 3-4). This allegation was justified with a dubious reference to his ‘spirit’: ‘Considering his exceptionally strong involvement in the group, it is impossible that the perpetrators, who were animated by the same spirit, did not inform their fellow group member that they were planning an action that involved the ruthless use of guns’ 118 (ibid.: 81). In order to prove the allegations against the trio, the prosecution called more than 100 witnesses and 11 experts to the trial (‘Anklage wegen Befreiung Andreas Baaders erhoben’ 1970).

On 1 March 1971, the first day of the trial, the defence requested that the proceedings be stopped (Mauz 1971b: 100). Defence lawyers for Schubert, Mahler and Goergens argued that although their trial had not yet begun, journalists, politicians and other representatives of the state had depicted their clients as public enemies and convicted criminals. The court rejected the complaint. As the Spiegel reporter Gerhard Mauz acknowledged ‘rarely was a motion by the defence as necessary as this

118 ‘Angesichts seiner außerordentlich engen Verstrickung mit der Tätergruppe ist es ausgeschlossen, daß die vom gleichen Geist beseelten Täter ein Mitglied ihrer Gruppe über die geplante Aktion – zu der auch der rücksichtlose Gebrauch von Schusswaffen gehörte – im unklaren gelassen haben würden’
one\textsuperscript{119} (ibid.). According to Mauz, the legal authorities – and in particular the leading prosecutor Hans-Dieter Nagel – were clearly biased. After observing the trial for several weeks, the journalist went as far as claiming that ‘Nagel was sowing the seeds of future violence when he presented dubious claims about past violence as if they were proven facts’\textsuperscript{120} (Mauz 1971a: 86). Moreover, press coverage of the trial illustrates that rather than throwing more light on the events of 14 May 1970, many testimonies questioned previously established facts, and some led to great controversy in the courtroom (cf Kreutzer 1971a, Bilges 1971, ‘Angeklagte nicht eindeutig erkannt’ 1971). While a number of witnesses confirmed that Goergens and Schubert had participated in Baader’s rescue, the prosecution failed to provide evidence that Mahler had knowingly supported the armed attack (cf. ‘Die Befreiung des Brandstifters Baader dauerte nur 90 Sekunden’ 1971, Kreutzer 1971b), yet Nagel demanded four years of juvenile detention for Goergens and six years of prison for Schubert and Mahler (Mauz 1971a: 89).

On 21 May 1971, exactly one year and one week after Baader’s rescue, the chair of the court pronounced the judgement: an acquittal for Mahler, a six-year long sentence for Schubert and four years juvenile detention for Goergens (Zykla 1971, for a detailed discussion of the trial against Schubert and Goergens, see Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 71-74). While there was no hard and fast evidence that Mahler had participated in the attack, the court saw it as proven that the two young women had

\textsuperscript{119} ‘seltener war ein Vorstoß der Verteidigung so notwendig wie dieser’

\textsuperscript{120} ‘Nagel hat [...] neue, zukünftige Gewalt gesät, als er in der Verhandlung über eine Gewaltanwendung der Vergangenheit höchst Zweifelhaftes als bewiesene Tatsache ausgab’
actively participated in Baader’s rescue. Yet the judges also acknowledged that they faced perpetrators with unusual backgrounds. The 26-year-old Schubert had just completed her training as a medical doctor in Berlin. The young woman had a middle-class background and no criminal record when she participated in Baader’s rescue.121 According to Diewald-Kerkmann’s analysis of the trial, the judges tried to explain Schubert’s recourse to violence with politicisation and radicalisation in the student movement and in the extra-parliamentary opposition (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 73). However, the court emphasised that neither Schubert nor Goergens played leading roles in the planning of Baader’s rescue.

The 19-year old Goergens was considerably younger and less educated than Meinhof, Ensslin and Schubert. After taking part in the production of Meinhof’s film Bambule, Goergens had worked as a housemaid. In 1969, she had returned to school to complete her Secondary School Certificate (ibid.: 71-74). The court suspected that Goergens participated in the raid for different reasons than the other women. A report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation depicted her as an apolitical and emotionally unstable teenager with a strong dependency on Meinhof (ibid.: 74). Rather than with reference to political ideology, the state authorities thus explained Goergen’s participation in Baader’s rescue by pointing to her emotional dependence on another person. Although the charges included a detailed reconstruction of the crime, the court failed to consider the spontaneous character of and situational dynamics during the attack. More importantly, legal authorities

121 BAK, criminal proceedings against Ingrid Eva Schubert, B131/180 SCH-159 426.
misinterpreted the tactics and the appearance of the women involved in the attack.

On the day of the attack, Goergens wore a long brunette wig and dark glasses with round frames and was dressed in a short skirt and a red jacket. Apparently, Schubert’s wig was shorter and blonde, and she wore a light black jacket and trousers (Nagel 1970: 56). It should be added that wigs, sunglasses and mini-skirts were popular accessories among young women in the late 1960s and early 1970s. According to a poll in 1969, one in four German women between the ages of 16 and 29 used hairpieces or wigs (’Zweitfrisuren’ 1969). Unlike the male participant in Baader’s rescue, Goergens and Schubert did not wear masks on the day of the attack. Rather, they were dressed like many other women their age. In the charges, the prosecution described them as ‘poorly disguised with wigs’\(^\text{122}\) (Nagel 1970: 6). However, it would be wrong to reduce the appearance of the two women to ‘poor disguise’. Precisely because the ‘poor disguise’ of Schubert and Goergens consisted of clothes and other accessories that many young middle and upper class women used at the time, they did not arouse suspicion in the library. Moreover, most witnesses were unable to remember any distinctive features of the two perpetrators, and the majority failed to recognise Schubert and Goergens during identity parades (Kreutzer 1971a). Rather than seeing their appearance as a form of ‘poor disguise’, I want to discuss it as a tactical use of femininity as camouflage.

\(^{122}\) ‘die mit Perücken notdürftig getarnten Angeschuldigten’
2.6.5 Discussion: A Tactical Use of Femininity as Camouflage

By presenting Baader’s liberation from the Central Institute for Social Issues as a carefully planned ‘gangster attack’, journalists and politicians gave a distorted image of the event. To begin with, they refused to call Baader and his liberators ‘Red Army Faction’, the name that they had chosen for themselves, and referred to the group instead as the ‘Baader Meinhof gang’. Some authors went as far as to present Baader and Meinhof as ‘West Germany’s Bonnie and Clyde’ (Morris 1971). In the late 1960s, Arthur Penn’s motion picture ‘Bonnie and Clyde’ had attracted many viewers in the US and other Western countries including the FRG. According to Wolfgang Kraushaar, ‘Bonnie and Clyde’ was ‘enormously popular’ among young people at the time and they felt that the RAF ‘adopted the film plot into real life’ (Jung 2007). Allegedly, ‘Bonnie and Clyde’ and other contemporary films were a source of inspiration for the founding members of the RAF. On the occasion of the US release of Uli Edel’s film The Baader Meinhof Complex in 2009, the journalist and RAF historian Stefan Aust told a journalist from the New York Times that ‘Bonnie and Clyde’ and ‘The Battle of Algiers’ were Baader’s favourite films (Kaplan 2009). Although it is possible that Baader identified with the image of the sexually attractive, fearless and heavily armed outlaw Clyde Chestnut Barrow, the attack at the Institute for Social Issues bore little similarity with the attacks in Arthur Penn’s film. Instead, Baader’s liberators used femininity as camouflage – a

123 Penn’s film was based on the life story of the ‘gangster couple’ Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, which ended with the death of the two lovers.
124 In this interview with the Abendblatt journalist Irene Jung, Wolfgang Kraushaar explained: ‘Bonnie & Clyde’ ist eine überaus romantische Besetzung des Gewaltmotivs und hat in der Jugendkultur Ende der 60er eine enorme Rolle gespielt. Die RAF bot eine Möglichkeit, diese Geschichte neu zu besetzen, diesmal allerdings in der Realität’
tactical move that featured prominently in Gillo Pontecorvo’s film ‘The Battle of Algiers’ from 1967.

The data examined in this case study shows that the event that marked the birth of the RAF was anything but a well-planned gangster attack. The fact that the authorities approved Baader’s meeting with Meinhof at the last minute provided his friends with a small window of opportunity in which to liberate him but left them with little time to prepare the attack. As Das Konzept Stadtguerilla and Astrid Proll’s account indicates, Baader’s liberators did not intend to harm civilians during the raid. Nevertheless, it happened; and all participants had to go underground to escape from justice. Going underground, as Donatella Della Porta highlights, is never a completely free choice. Rather, it is a response to perceived or actual state repression in the context of particular events (Della Porta 1995: 111). The ‘accident’ during Baader’s rescue illustrates the fact that manifestations of violence can develop a dynamic of their own that quickly exceeds the control of the actors involved. Neither the perpetrators themselves nor journalists or state authorities who commented on the attack accounted for the fact that the birth of the RAF was largely if not exclusively the result of situational dynamics and unanticipated events. To my surprise, I found that a similar conclusion can be drawn about the gendered performances of the actors involved.

Since the Institute of Social Issues does not keep statistics about the age or sex of visitors, it is hardly possible to make empirical claims about other users of the library at the time. However, large numbers of social workers and students with an interest in this field are female, and –
according to the vice-president of the Institute Heidi Koschwitz – the library was (and still is) mainly used by women.\textsuperscript{125} Initially, I had therefore assumed that the founding members of the RAF had consciously chosen three women to prepare Baader’s rescue in the building. Two interviews with Monika Berberich, however, proved me wrong. In 2002, Berberich explained the selection of participants in the attack in an interview with a leftist magazine as follows:

Initially, we chose only women to participate in Andreas’ liberation (for practical not for ideological reasons). Since the plan envisaged that someone would keep the armed guards in check by threatening them, there were concerns that the guards would resist, because they did not take women seriously. Then the women would have found themselves in the position of having to shoot to assert themselves, and we absolutely wanted to avoid that. Therefore we included a man at the last moment.\textsuperscript{126} (Berberich 2002)

During an interview conducted in the context of this thesis, I asked Monika Berberich to explain what she meant by ‘practical’ reasons. Rather than choosing the participants in Baader's rescue based on their gender, Berberich indicated to me that the group chose them depending on availability on the day of the attack.\textsuperscript{127} When it turned out that all potential candidates were women, some in the group raised concerns that

\textsuperscript{125} Heidi Koschwitz, vice-president of the Institute for Social Issues, in an e-mail to the author on 22 September 2010.

\textsuperscript{126} ‘Bei der Aktion zur Befreiung von Andreas sollten zunächst nur Frauen beteiligt sein (aus praktischen Gründen, nicht ideologischen). Weil der Plan aber vorsah, die Schließer, die Andreas bewachten und die bewaffnet waren, durch Drohungen zum Stillhalten zu zwingen, tauchte die Vermutung auf, dass die Schließer Widerstand leisten würden, weil sie die Frauen nicht ernst nähmen. Dann hätten die Frauen schießen müssen, um sich durchzusetzen, und das wollte man unbedingt vermeiden. Deshalb wurde im letzten Augenblick ein Mann dazugenommen.’

\textsuperscript{127} Source: Interview with Monika Berberich on 2 May 2011.
Baader’s armed guards would not take a group of women seriously. To minimise the risk of a violent confrontation with the guards, the group decided shortly before the attack to hire Hans-Jürgen Bäcker, a ‘so-called expert’ with a criminal record (Proll 2004: 11). Ironically, it was Bäcker who triggered the violent confrontation between the guards and the intruders during Baader’s rescue by shooting at an employee of the Institute. While the testimonies of Berberich, Proll and other members of the RAF need to be interpreted with caution, they indicate that Baader’s liberators regarded femininity initially as a handicap rather than as a potential advantage.

Notwithstanding possible concerns, female members drew effectively on feminine accessories and stereotypes to prepare and initiate Baader’s rescue. Following Michel de Certeau and Claire Colebrook, I want to understand the gendered performances of Baader’s liberators as a tactical use of femininity: femininity as camouflage. In The Practice of Everyday Life, de Certeau distinguishes between strategies and tactics of everyday life and argues that while strategies are able to produce, structure and impose spaces, tactics can only use, manipulate and divert them (Certeau 1988: 30). According to de Certeau, a ‘tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance’ (ibid.: xix). Tactics, in other words, seize opportunities that emerge at particular moments in specific spatial arrangements and social structures. Just such an opportunistic practice was at play in the action to liberate Baader.

In a useful development of de Certeau, Colebrook highlights that femininity can be used in both strategic and tactical ways. According to
Colebrook, the mobilisation of femininity in advertisements and popular culture shows that the feminine is ‘capable of co-optation, colonialization, and strategic deployment’ (Colebrook 2001: 567). Yet any gender regime offers the possibility of tactical recourses to femininity in everyday life, which can (but do not have to) be subversive. ‘The tactic’, according to Colebrook, ‘retrieves, remembers, or repeats the “spatial practice” that has enabled the putative originality of strategic logic’ (ibid.: 558). The tactic occurs, notes Colebrook, ‘when a term totally immanent to the system – say, the feminine with all its stereotypes, clichés and norms – repeats that system as a system, as stereotype, cliché, norm’ (ibid.: 568).

Whilst aligning themselves with the struggles of the Black Panther Party and the working class all over the world, Baader’s liberators drew on gendered norms and appearances from the specific social background which most of them had in common: the white middle class in West Germany. With wigs, sunglasses, feminine clothing and make up, Irene Goergens and Ingrid Schubert were no more ‘disguised’ than many women from that background were in their daily life. Schubert and Goergens’ appearance at the Institute for Social Issues can be understood as the first tactical use of femininity as camouflage in the history of the RAF, because they dressed up not to look feminine but to prepare an armed attack without arousing suspicion. In a double move, the two women drew on and broke with femininity in the conventional sense.

While it seems that the tactical recourse to femininity during the liberation of Andreas Baader was mainly if not exclusively the result of situational dynamics and unconscious acts, the RAF soon began to use feminine traits and accessories in a more systematic manner. As
mentioned previously, men and women in the group used hair dye, permanent waves, wigs, make up and clothes to change their appearances to avoid arrest. In the following years, the RAF used feminine traits and accessories repeatedly and deliberately to commit acts of violence. This chapter opened with a discussion of the attack that probably constituted the best-known use of femininity as camouflage in the history of the RAF: the killing of Jürgen Ponto in 1977. The section on the activities of the group in this chapter mentioned further examples of this tactic of camouflage including the so-called baby bomb from 1972 and the pram that members of the RAF used in 1977 to carry arms. What had thus begun as a barely conscious embodiment of gender norms evolved soon into a more deliberate use of femininity as camouflage. Interestingly, this tactic featured prominently in one of Baader’s favourite films ‘The Battle of Algiers’.

In Gillo Pontecorvo’s ‘The Battle of Algiers’, a female resistance fighter hides a pistol in her handbag that she passes on to male comrade who has the mission to kill a police officer. Another scene shows men dressed up in women’s clothing to escape from a house surrounded by French soldiers. Finally, the film shows how female FLN members dressed up as Western women to smuggle bombs into the European quarter of Algiers. Research confirms that women played an active role in the Algerian war for independence, and, among other tactics, used feminine clothing and accessories to prepare and commit attacks (cf. Turshen 2002). While the geo-political background of the struggle of the RAF in West Germany was very different to that of the FLN in Algeria, both groups have thus at least occasionally used a similar tactic. This
tactical recourse to femininity should not be mistaken for an attempt to subvert the existing gender norms. Both groups drew on Marxist thought and a range of other theories to explain and justify their struggle. Contrary to the RAF, the FLN was strongly influenced by Islamic ethics and ideas. In the cases of both groups, the tactical recourse to femininity by female – and less frequently but equally interestingly – by male fighters did not follow from their ideological framework. Rather, the history of the two groups show that there is a dynamic interaction between ideology, tactics, and embodied practices of perpetrators of political violence, in which the use of femininity as camouflage by no means requires or leads to a feminist agenda.

In Chapter 1, I introduced Luce Irigaray’s philosophy of sexual difference and her notion of mimesis. According to Irigaray, a collective appropriation and redefinition of femininity can help to lay the foundations for a culture of two subjectivities, in which woman is not reduced to the other of man. While Goergens and Schubert drew on and broke with the conventional notion of femininity, their mimetic performances were clearly not part of such a feminist project. This chapter found that rather than working towards new forms of female subjectivity, women in the RAF wanted to be equal to their male comrades. Following Braidotti, I assume that in order to evaluate the subversive potential of the use of femininity as camouflage in the history of the RAF, we need to investigate the extent to which this recourse to femininity opened up ‘in-between spaces’ that can become testing grounds of alternative forms of female subjectivity (Braidotti 2011: 28). The gendered dynamics during Baader’s rescue and their social
repercussions indicate that the RAF’s use of femininity as camouflage did not open up such in-between spaces. Neither by conforming to the masculine identity of the revolutionary nor by using femininity as camouflage did women in the RAF challenge the underlying order, which defines and limits both of these gendered positions. As we shall see in the next chapter, a similar conclusion can be drawn about the gendered performances of women in the MJ2.
3. The Movement of June Second

3.1 Introduction

When it comes to terrorism and political violence, the German collective memory is occupied almost entirely with the RAF (Schiffer 2001: 238, Wunschik 2006: 532, Korndörfer 2008). A number of differences between the MJ2 and the RAF may have contributed to the lack of interest in the MJ2. Firstly, the group had a considerably shorter life span and fewer members. Secondly, as highlighted in the first chapter, MJ2-attacks were mostly less spectacular and resulted in significantly less casualties. Thirdly, no member of the MJ2 came even close to achieving the publicity of leading figures in the RAF. Tobias Wunschik argues that ‘the “RAF icons” Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin und Ulrike Meinhof seem to outdo the figureheads of the MJ2 and its predecessors’ (Wunschik 2006: 531). Finally, the MJ2 took a radically anti-intellectualist stance and did not even attempt to develop a theoretical foundation for their armed struggle. Rather than trying to analyse the scattered statements of the MJ2, most researchers with an interest in the relation of ideology to political violence in the FRG have therefore focused on the extensive theory papers of the RAF.

This chapter shows that the MJ2 had a different self-conception and a different approach to violence than the RAF; but it also reveals that both groups faced similar practical challenges. Like the RAF, the MJ2 rejected a conventional lifestyle but appropriated a ‘bourgeois

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128 ‘die ‘RAF-Ikonen’ Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin und Ulrike Meinhof überragen scheinbar um Längen die Galionsfiguren der Bewegung 2. Juni und ihrer Vorläufer’
appearance’. Like in the RAF, women in the MJ2 felt equal to their male comrades in every regard, but on occasion made use of feminine traits and stereotypes to prepare attacks. The liberation of the MJ2 member Till Meyer in May 1978 constituted such an occasion. Eight years after Andreas Baader’s rescue from a prison in Berlin by Ulrike Meinhof and other founding members of the RAF (see Chapter 2), female members of the MJ2 liberated Meyer by force of arms from the same prison. Two women, who identified themselves as lawyers, passed through the entrance gate of the prison in Moabit, Berlin. In her autobiography, Inge Viett noted that she and her companion tried to look ‘respectable’ [seriös] (Viett 1997: 187). Both had conservative hairstyles, wore decent clothes and carried document folders under their arms (ibid.). Nobody noticed that the two women were hiding guns under their light summer coats (ibid.: 191). Once inside, they pulled out the weapons and demanded that prison guards open the cells of their comrades Till Meyer and Andreas Vogel. Since the guards forcefully resisted the raid, the women deviated from their original plan and escaped with one instead of both detained comrades.

This chapter illustrates that the liberation of Till Meyer was neither the first nor the only recourse to femininity as camouflage in the history of the MJ2. With the kidnapping of Peter Lorenz in February 1975, the case study in the second part of this chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the gendered performances of the actors involved in one of these attacks. Since the hostage and several kidnappers have provided detailed descriptions of the six-day long kidnapping, and because the police and the press monitored the course of events closely, the case study
can give vivid insights into the complex role of sexual difference in manifestations of political violence. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti and other feminist thinkers, the discussion of the gendered performances of the kidnappers shows that whilst ideologically opposing the prevailing gender norms, women in the MJ2 acted in ways that consciously and unconsciously confirmed dominant notions of femininity.

### 3.2 Existing Literature and Data Collection

While research on the RAF can draw on a rich corpus of internal and external sources, there is considerably less literature on the MJ2. Unlike the RAF, the group released few texts that could clarify its theoretical and ideological positions in its active phase. In fact, the existing group statements and autobiographical accounts by former members clearly indicate that the MJ2 refused to develop a clear-cut ideological and theoretical position. As this chapter illustrates, the anti-theoretical and undogmatic approach of the MJ2 had far-reaching consequences on the development and perception of the group. Berhard Rabert concludes that, compared to the RAF, ‘ideologically, the group remained “colourless”. Rather than developing a long-term strategy, it focused on single events’\(^{129}\) (Rabert 1995: 191).

Apart from a few diploma theses (see, e.g. Schiffer 2001, März 2007, Stern 1998), one case study (Dahlke 2007), and several contributions to anthologies (see, e.g. Claessens and Ahna 1982, Korndörfer 2008, Wunschik 2006), there are to date no scholarly

\(^{129}\) ‘ideologisch eine ‘blasse Erscheinung’, die auf Einzelerscheinungen ausgerichtet blieb, ohne dass eine übergeordnete Strategie erkennbar wurde’
publications on the MJ2. Whenever possible, this chapter considers previous research and critically examines a range of sources. However, this is not always possible. Due to the lack of secondary literature, parts of this chapter draw primarily on autobiographical accounts and interviews by former group members (see, e.g. Baumann 1980, Baumann and Meueler 2008, Baumann 1987, Meyer 2008, Viett 1996, Viett 1997, Rollnik and Dubbe 2004, Fritzsch and Reinders 1995). While the substance of personal accounts must be evaluated critically (even more so because most authors have cooperated extensively with police and intelligence services), they are often the only sources at hand, and thus indispensable for research on the MJ2.

Due to its spectacular nature, the abduction of Peter Lorenz in 1975 received more attention by scholars and journalists than any other event in the history of the MJ2. A number of publications of the group mention the kidnapping briefly (Claessens and Ahna 1982, Schiffer 2001, Wunschik 2006, Korndörfer 2008), and three authors have provided detailed discussions of the abduction (Stern 1998, März 2007, Dahlke 2007). Based on the research for his unpublished thesis Die ‘Bewegung 2. Juni’ und die Lorenz-Entführung, Klaus Stern has also produced a film about the kidnapping of the CDU mayoral candidate (2000). Neither Stern, nor Dahlke or Korndörfer, however, have considered gender in their discussions of the event. Drawing on published and unpublished sources, the case study in this chapter offers a gender-sensitive analysis of the kidnapping. Apart from scholarly publications, this analysis is based on the detailed testimony that Peter Lorenz provided after his release, on autobiographical accounts by former participants (Rollnik and Dubbe...
2004, Meyer 2008, Fritsch and Reinders 1995, Viett 1997), and on the extensive media coverage of the event in the local and national press.

### 3.3 History

#### 3.3.1 The Subcultural Background of the MJ2

Like the RAF, the MJ2 originated in West Berlin. However, while the former redeployed its forces soon after its formation to cities in West Germany, the latter remained based in and focused on Berlin (Backes and Jesse 1990: 156). Michael Baumann, one of the founding members of the MJ2, explained their local emphasis as follows: ‘We simply said that we do it differently from the RAF; we stay in one city, we stay in Berlin, which we know better than any other place, and we don’t speed through West Germany in a BMW’\(^{130}\) (Baumann 1980: 99). The MJ2 emerged from and identified with a part of the subcultural scene in West Berlin, which became known as the ‘Berlin Underground’. According to Anja Schwanhäußer, the ‘Berlin Underground’ can be defined as a ‘broad intellectual subcultural movement in the 1960s and 70s, whose followers sought to find alternatives to the dominant bourgeois lifestyle as well as to develop and practice alternative norms and values’\(^ {131}\) (Schwanhäusser 2002: 19).

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\(^{130}\) ‘Wir haben dann einfach gesagt, wir machen das anders als die RAF, wir bleiben in einer Stadt, wir bleiben in Berlin, weil wir uns hier am besten auskennen und rasen nicht irgendwo durch Westdeutschland im BMW’. In his statement, Baumann mockingly refers to the alleged preference of the RAF for premium cars. It was a common joke at the time to claim that the abbreviation BMW, which stands for Bavarian Motor Works, should be redefined as ‘Baader-Meinhof-Wagen’ [Baader-Meinhof-car].

\(^{131}\) ‘eine breite intellektuelle subkulturelle Strömung der der 60er und 70er Jahre, deren Vertreter […] in welcher Form auch immer, nach Alternativen zum herrschenden, bürgerlich geprägten Lebensstil suchten, nach alternativen Normen und Werten und diese zu leben versuchten’.
Even if there were numerous intersections and overlaps between the Berlin Underground and the student movement, the two subcultures should be distinguished for three reasons. First, the lifestyle of most students at the time differed considerably from that of the individuals and groups associated with the Berlin Underground. Only parts of the anti-authoritarian wing in the APO led similarly unconventional lives to most people in the drug scene, the ‘Gammler’ movement or in the first communes (Grob 1985: 203). Second, groups in the Berlin Underground tended to be less intellectualist and more accessible to young people from lower class backgrounds than the SDS and other student organisations (Siegfried 2006a: 402). Third, similar to other hedonistic youth-subcultures in the 1950s and early 1960s, the individuals and groups associated with the Berlin Underground had – at least initially – no political agenda. Rather, the young people in this diverse subcultural scene shared a desire to experience a life outside existing social norms and constraints. The founding members of the MJ2 were strongly influenced by this alternative and pleasure-oriented lifestyle. Unlike the RAF, the group was convinced that the revolution should be ‘fun’ for the revolutionaries.

A first thread of the Berlin Underground, which influenced the formation of the MJ2, is the ‘Gammler’ movement. According to the sociologist Walter Hollstein, ‘Gammler’ can be defined as a group of

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132 Literally translated the German word ‘gammeln’ means ‘to spoil’ or ‘go off’. Since the 1950s, the term has been used in a colloquial way to refer to certain forms of idleness. In this context, it could be translated as ‘lazing around’. Some authors translate the term ‘Gammler’ as ‘dropouts’ (e.g. Weinhaeuser 2006) or ‘beatniks’ (a similar youth-movement in the US). Since none of these translations covers all aspects and specificities of the German term, I use it in the original form.
people, ‘who deliberately elude the conformity of life’\textsuperscript{133} (quoted after Siegfried 2006a: 400). In West Berlin, the movement reached the broadest popular appeal and greatest visibility in the mid-1960s. At the time, the young dropouts met at a few pubs and open areas such as the city park around the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church (Baumann 1980, see also: Weinhauer 2006). Many ‘Gammler’ had a permanent home and opted out of society only temporarily (Siegfried 2006a: 402). In 1966, the Lower Saxon interior ministry characterised members of the movements as ‘young men and women, mostly under 25 years old, usually intellectually open-minded, often with well-to-do parents, gathering in groups, sometimes politically active, re-integration into society at a later stage likely’\textsuperscript{134} (‘Schalom aleichem’ 1966: 76). Although most participants in the ‘Gammler’-movement were men, there were also women among the young drop-outs (Siegfried 2006a: 401). Unlike some intellectualist subcultures at the time, the ‘Gammler’-movement was both attractive and accessible to working class youth. The public gatherings of the ‘Gammler’-movement allowed a temporary escape from frustrations and alienation at work (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 104). Baumann, who used to be a ‘Gammler’ before joining the armed struggle, acknowledges that, in the mid-1960s, he was hardly interested in politics. Above all, it was ‘the cultural side’ [die kulturelle Seite] of the movement that aroused his interest (Baumann 1980: 17). Rather than political campaigners,

\textsuperscript{133} ‘die sich der Konformität des Lebens bewusst entziehen’

\textsuperscript{134} ‘zumeist unter 25, Jungen wie Mädchen, vielfach geistig aufgeschlossen, oft gutsituierte Eltern, gruppenweise auftretend, teils politisch engagiert, gesellschaftliche Wiedereingliederung nach Reifeprozess wahrscheinlich’
Baumann and other ‘Gammler’ identified in the mid-1960s as ‘lifestyle revolutionaries’.

Similar to the hippies, the ‘Gammler’ movement cultivated an aesthetic of difference. Even though ‘disposition (Habitus) and political directions differed from town to town’ (Weinhauer 2006: 380), the movement developed a distinct style. Detlef Siegfried summarises the main characteristics of this subcultural style as follows: ‘pointedly informal clothing (preferably jeans, US-military jackets and anoraks with slogans, band names, the Easter march symbol), long hair, casual attitude, a specific slang, a preference for beat- and folk music’ (Siegfried 2006a: 400). Autobiographical accounts of former MJ2-members mention several of these stylistic elements: Baumann highlights the symbolic significance of army jackets with scribbles such as ‘BAN THE BOMB’ (Baumann 1980: 12). Ralf Reinders and Ronald Fritzsch, like Baumann founding members of the MJ2, were also part of the ‘Gammler’-movement. In the mid-1960s, they listened to the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and began to grow their hair (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 13-14). And they were not the only future members of the MJ2 to do so.

Even if its followers were primarily ‘lifestyle revolutionaries’, the ‘Gammler’ movement attracted considerable attention in the media and provoked hostile responses in wide sections of the population (Siegfried 2006b). According to an opinion poll from 1967, more than half of the Germans endorsed ‘compulsory measures to force the drop-outs into

\[135\] 'betont legere Kleidung (gern Jeans sowie Jacken und Parka aus amerikanischen Armeebeständen, die mit Parolen, Namen von Beatbands und dem Ostermarschzeichen versehen wurden), lange Haare, lässige Haltung, ein bestimmter Jargon, Vorliebe für Beat- und Folkmusik'
work’. Some called for even more draconic sanctions and ‘underscored that Hitler would “have coped with these parasites in a different manner”’ (quoted in Weinhauer 2006: 381). Several members of the MJ2 highlight that they experienced this hostility first-hand: Baumann, Reinders and Fritsch mention repeated verbal and physical abuse as well as other forms of discrimination. It seems that in particular the long hair of the young men in the ‘Gammler’ movement was perceived as a gross violation of the predominant ideal of masculinity. Reinders notes: ‘People refused to sell you beer, you got beaten up. Occasionally, some idiots were lurking around a corner to cut people’s hair’136 (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 13). Baumann goes even further and claimed ‘[s]uddenly, you were a kind of Jew or negro or leper, unwittingly rejected’137 (Baumann 1980: 8). Doubtlessly, a simple equation of discriminatory behaviour against longhaired ‘Gammler’ with anti-Semitism and racism is fraught with problems; but repeated offences and verbal attacks certainly contributed to the radicalisation of future members of the MJ2 and reinforced their opposition to society at large (Claessens and Ahna 1982).

The commune movement is a second thread of the subcultural scene in West Berlin, which was also important for the formation of the MJ2. Communes were not merely shared houses. For the anti-authoritarian wing of the student movement, they were a political project of central importance. The communards wanted to promote and practice a revolutionary life style, which implied a radical opposition to capitalism,

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136 ‘Du hast kein Bier gekriegt, bist verprügelt worden. Manchmal haben irgendwelche Penner an den Ecken gelauert und wollten den Leuten die Haare schneiden’
137 ‘Du bist denn plötzlich sone Art Jude oder Neger oder Aussätziger, auf alle Fälle bist du irgendwie draußen, vollkommen unbewusst’
individualism and the ‘bourgeois’ model of the nuclear family (Siegfried 2006a: 654). According to Dieter Claessens and Karin de Ahna, the objectives of the commune movement were ‘the liquidation of a possessive mentality and behaviour with respect to property and partners, the collective analysis of experienced and observed problems related to this process, and the planning of activities’ (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 95).

The first and, beyond doubt, most famous commune in West Berlin was the ‘Kommune 1’ (K1). Inspired by political avant-garde movements such as the ‘Situationist International’ and literature (e.g. Herbert Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man* from 1965, which was first published in German in 1967), activists from Berlin and Munich founded the K1 in January 1967. The occupants of the K1 soon attracted media attention with remarks about ‘orgasmic dysfunctions’ rather than more conventionally political demands. Their public conduct incurred unease in the student movement and led to the exclusion of the communards from the SDS (Siegfried 2006a: 647). The founding members of the MJ2, on the other hand, found precisely the flagrant hedonism and public provocations of the K1 appealing (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 18, Baumann 1980: 18). Shortly after the K1 had opened its doors, three women, four men and two children formed the K2, a second commune in West Berlin. The founding members of the K2 distanced themselves from the aims and methods of the K1. They wanted to create a collective that actively supported the political work of the SDS. Among other things, this

138 ‘die Auflösung von Besitzdenken und -verhalten gegenüber Eigentum wie Partnern, die gemeinschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit damit verbundenen, erlebten und beobachteten Problemen, und die Planung [von] Aktionen’
political project implied in the eyes of the communards the imperative of abolishing the gendered division of labour in everyday life and collectivising parenting (Schulz 1999).

From the very beginning, women took an active role in the commune movement. They were among the founding members of the K1, the K2, and other political housing projects that emerged in the late 1960s. Among other reasons, women in the radical Left took a vital interest in communal living and working because many of them still suffered from the status quo in their daily lives within alternative circles (Kolb and Stössinger 1981). Whilst publicly opposing all forms of domination and oppression, many leftist activists tended to maintain a gendered division of labour in their private lives, which left their girlfriends and wives with most of the housework and childcare (Kätzel 2002). While communes promised to bridge the gap between public and everyday politics, the communards soon found that they could not easily overcome deeply engrained gender norms. The editors of a feminist anthology about the roles of women in alternative projects in West Germany emphasise how ‘[e]ngrained incapacies and constraining role clichés appeared in every nook and cranny – ways to outgrow these limits had yet to be found’139 (Kolb and Stössinger 1981).

Amongst the different positions in the student movement, the anti-authoritarian and practically oriented approach of the communards had doubtlessly the greatest appeal with working class youth and pleasure-minded subcultures such as the ‘Gammler’ movement. Indeed, Claessens

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139 ‘An allen Ecken und Enden erwies sich die Hartnäckigkeit eingefleischter Unfähigkeiten, Fesselungen an Rollenklischees – der Sprung über den eigenen Schatten musste erst entwickelt werden’
and de Ahna rightly emphasise that the occupants of the K1 and the Gammler had a lot in common: ‘sociability and ability to communicate, ways of behaving that emphasise spontaneity and emotionality, a focus on practice in thinking and acting’ (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 106).

Inspired by the K1, a group of students and working-class youth founded the Wieland-Kommune in Berlin Charlottenburg. The collective of ten to twenty adults and three children financed themselves with pirate editions of anarchist literature and other political texts, and with petty crimes such as shoplifting. The group identified as the ‘militant core’ of the subculture in Berlin (Baumann and Meueler 2008: 52). In 1969, a loose network of occupants and visitors of the Wieland-Kommune and members of the K1 formed the ‘Hash-Rebels’ and the ‘Tupamaros West-Berlin’ (TW). Both groups are direct predecessors of the MJ2.

In order to understand the formation of the ‘Hash Rebels’, the TW – and ultimately – the MJ2, we need to turn at least briefly to a third thread of the Berlin Underground: the emerging drug scene. Up until the 1960s, drugs were – with the exception of alcohol – consumed privately and were most prevalent in specific sectors of society such as people working in health care or veterans (cp. Weinhauer 2006: 380, Briesen 2007: 43). This changed in the mid-1960s, when ‘collective drug consumption was celebrated in public spaces like the famous smoke-in in the West Berlin Tiergarten district’ (Weinhauer 2006: 382). Initially, drug use in West Berlin was mostly limited to ‘soft’ drugs (i.e. marijuana and hashish). In the early 1970s, however, the police registered a steep
rise in the consumption of ‘hard’ drugs (mainly heroin) (ibid.: 386). Autobiographical accounts by former group members indicate that most in the MJ2 experimented with cannabis or were regular users of the drug. Inge Viett was a member of the ‘black help’, an anarchist support group for prisoners, before joining the armed struggle. She notes in her autobiography: ‘hash and grass were part of our everyday life’\textsuperscript{141} (Viett 1997: 76). Other members of the MJ2 acknowledge that they consumed marijuana in such significant amounts that they had to sell it to finance their habit (Baumann 1980, Fritzsch and Reinders 1995).

Like the student and protest movement, the drug scene in Berlin was most vibrant in the city districts of Kreuzberg, Schöneberg and parts of Tiergarten and Charlottenburg. For several years, the protest and student movement and the drug scene coexisted and intersected in these parts of West Berlin. In the 1960s, more than a few leftist activists in West Berlin were interested in the assumed consciousness-expanding and revolutionary potential of cannabis and other drugs. Klaus Weinhauer emphasises, however, that ‘the early 1970s marked a multiple caesura in drug consumption and in its perception’ (Weinhauer 2006: 383). By the late 1960s, most individuals and groups associated with the New Left deemed the use of drugs irresponsible and counter-revolutionary (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 135). As a result, the founding members of the MJ2 and other drug enthusiasts found themselves in an increasingly isolated position in the New Left. As highlighted in the first chapter, the early 1970s saw a growing agitation against the student movement and an increase in violent clashes during political protests (see, e.g. Rucht 1998, \textsuperscript{141} ‘Shit und Mariuana gehörten zu unserem Alltag’
Moreover, the police tried to put a stop to the thriving drug trade in West Berlin. A number of people in the drug scene, however, refused to accept the frequent police raids and decided to ‘fight back’ [zurück zu schlagen] (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 22-23). Initially, this recourse to violence in the drug scene in West Berlin was mostly spontaneous and defensive. Many actors involved had no farther-reaching political aims.

In fact, one of the first big clashes between members of the Berlin Underground and the police exemplifies that the radicalisation of some MJ2 members clearly preceded their politicisation. In 1965, a crowd of up to 250 people – including at least four members of the MJ2 – stormed a Rolling Stones concert on an open air stage in Berlin without valid tickets (Siegfried 2006b: 88). The actors involved did not identify as a political group, nor did they intend to ‘cause damage to a political adversary in order to impose political aims’ – which would define their conduct as political violence in the narrow sense of the term (Della Porta 1995: 2). Rather, they shared a passion for the Rolling Stones and spontaneously decided that they would try to see the concert for free (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 14). Not only did the crowd manage to push through the security barriers, they also defended themselves successfully against intervening police forces and stayed until the end of the concert. After the gig, the conflict between the police and parts of the concert audience escalated and resulted in the complete destruction of the stage and injuries on both sides. Even if it had no political background, the riot became an ‘identity-establishing event’ [identitätsstiftendes Ereignis] for future members of the MJ2: they felt united in their opposition to the
state and its authorities (Korndörfer 2008: 239). Thus, Rabert rightly argues that ‘the period prior to the formation of the MJ2 was characterised by an oppositional lifestyle rather than a politicisation of the group members’ \(^{142}\) (Rabert 1995: 191-192).

3.3.2 **First forms of organised political militancy**

As highlighted in Chapter 1, a number of events in the late 1960s played an important part in the radicalisation and politicisation of the founding members of the MJ2 and others in the radical Left in West Germany. Wolfgang Kraushaar points out that in the heated atmosphere of West Berlin in the mid-1960s, a single event sufficed to spark off a revolt: the killing of the student Benno Ohnesorg during the anti-Shah demonstration on 2 June 1967 (Kraushaar 2006b: 526-527). The fact that a police officer could get away with shooting a peaceful demonstrator shocked and mobilised young people across political lines and subcultural divisions.\(^{143}\) As highlighted in the first chapter, the name ‘Movement of June 2’ indicates the centrality of this event for the founding members of the MJ2. Reinders notes: ‘After all the blows and beatings, we felt that the cops had shot at us all’ \(^{144}\) (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 18). The attempted assassination of the student leader Rudi Dutschke in spring 1968 had an equally agitating effect on the founding members of the MJ2. Baumann describes his feelings after the attack on Dutschke as follows: ‘The bullet

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\(^{142}\) ‘in der Vorphase der Bewegung 2. Juni stand nicht die Politisierung, sondern die protesthafte Lebensform als Ausgangspunkt ihrer Aktivitäten’

\(^{143}\) Karl-Heinz Kurras, the police officer who shot Ohnesorg, stood trial for manslaughter but was acquitted of the charge. In 2009, the case was reviewed when investigations exposed Kurras as a secret agent for the Ministry of State Security of the GDR. For a detailed discussion of the case, see: Kellerhoff 2010.

\(^{144}\) ‘Nach all den Prügeln und Schlägen hatten wir das Gefühl, daß die Bullen auf uns alle geschossen haben’
was as much directed against you [as against Rudi Dutschke]. It was the first time that they shot directly at you. I don’t give a shit who is shooting. No more excuses. It was time to hit back\(^\text{145}\) (Baumann 1980: 38).

The formation of the ‘Central Council of the Roaming Hash Rebels’ [Zentralrat der umherschweifenden Haschrebellen]\(^\text{146}\) was a key step towards the development of the MJ2. In 1969, a number of occupants and visitors of the previously mentioned ‘Wieland-Kommune’ began to call themselves ‘Hash Rebels’. Unlike most in the Berlin Underground, the ‘Hash Rebels’ no longer wanted to limit themselves to defensive violence, but called for an ‘active struggle’ [aktiver Kampf] against the police and drug squads in Berlin (Baumann 1980: 51). Amongst the ‘Hash Rebels’ were several future members of the MJ2: Thomas Weisbecker, Ralf Reinders, Michael Baumann, Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, Norbert Kröcher and Ina Siepmann. Some group members had a university background (e.g. Thomas Weisbecker and Georg von Rauch), others originated in the working class; and most had gathered experiences in the Berlin Underground. Inspired by the hedonist spirit of the subcultural scene and a selective recourse to anarchist ideas, the group preached a ‘crude vitalism’ [kruder Vitalismus] (Kraushaar 2005: 158): ‘Don’t give a shit about this society of semi-seniles and taboos. Run wild and do beautiful things. Have a joint!’\(^\text{147}\) (Baumann 1980: 51). The political demands of the ‘Hash Rebels’ were simple and mostly pleasure-oriented.

\(^\text{145}\) ‘Die Kugel war genauso gegen dich, da haben die das erste mal nun voll auf dich geschossen. Wer da schießt ist scheißegal. Da war natürlich klar, jetzt zuhauen, kein Pardon mehr geben’

\(^\text{146}\) Allegedly, it was Dieter Kunzelmann, a former member of the K1, who came up with the name, which mockingly refers to Mao Zedong’s remarks about roaming rebels and the hierarchical structures of leftist organisations at the time (Kraushaar 2006: 515).

\(^\text{147}\) ‘Scheißt auf diese Gesellschaft der Halbgreise und Tabus. Werdet wild und tut schöne Sachen. Have a joint’
Ralf Reinders explains: ‘We simply wanted to assert that we can smoke. After all, the others can booze, too’ (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 23).

Whilst maintaining the style of the subcultural scene, the ‘Hash Rebels’ called for a new level of militancy and aggression. Put simply, the ‘Hash Rebels’ looked like ‘Gammler’, lived like communards and consumed significant amounts of drugs. Most members of the group had opted out of the world of work and had neither private property nor a permanent residence (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 107). Till Meyer, like Fritzsch, Reinders, Baumann and Viett a former member of the MJ2, describes their self-understanding at the time: ‘We not only looked wild, we were wild, and we were dangerous’ (Meyer 2008: 162). Indeed, as mentioned above, the ‘Hash Rebels’ deemed the time was ripe to proceed from defensive violence against the police (e.g. with paving stones) to proactive attacks with Molotov cocktails and explosives (Siegfried 2006b: 88). The name ‘Central Council of the Roaming Hash Rebels’ was ironic. ‘Of course’, notes Baumann, ‘there was no central council, no chief and no leader’ (Baumann and Meueler 2008: 51). The loose structure of the group reflects the anti-authoritarian, spontaneous and pleasure-oriented spirit of the subcultural environment in which it emerged. As we shall see, the same characteristics applied to the MJ2.

The ‘Hash Rebels’ became the driving force in the formation of the ‘Blues’, a loose network of militant leftist groups in West Berlin. Initially, the inner circle of the ‘Blues’ consisted of approximately 30 members with

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148 ‘Wir wollten einfach durchsetzen, daß wir rauchen können. Die anderen können schließlich auch saufen’

149 ‘Wir sahen nicht nur wild aus, wir waren es auch, und wir waren gefährlich’

150 ‘Selbstverständlich gab es bei uns keinen Zentralrat, keinen Chef und keine Leitung’
a ‘hard core’ of 5 members (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 123). According to Wolfgang Kraushaar, the name ‘Blues’ was a reference to the melancholic ‘sound’ of the subculture. He explains: ‘those who identified with this label felt that they were excluded, marginalised, criminalised and condemned to a life on the fringe of society’¹⁵¹ (Kraushaar 2006b: 516). The ‘Blues’ was a network of small and mostly short-lived groups, whose political objectives ranged from the legalisation of hashish to the organisation of youth centres.

While the ‘Blues’ was clearly dominated by men, there were exceptions. The ‘Women’s Liberation Front’ [Frauenbefreiungsfront], for instance, was a short-lived alliance of women who promoted a violent struggle against the oppression of women in society at large and in leftist groups (Der Blues gesammelte Texte der Bewegung 2. Juni: 85). Taking inspiration from figures as diverse as Valerie Solanas, Emma Goldman and Leila Khaled, the Women’s Liberation Front claimed in 1969 ‘[w]e fight against hierarchy, [i.e.] the domination of humans by other humans. This struggle can only be fought by women, because even the most oppressed proletarian is still also the oppressor of his wife and children and of any girl on the street’¹⁵² (Perincioli 1999: 101). According to a former acquaintance, the future MJ2 members Angela Luther and Verena Becker were among the first women in Berlin to carry out violent attacks against perceived oppressors. Apparently, they attacked the property of misogynist gynaecologists with butyric acid and paint (ibid.: 103). As we

¹⁵¹ ‘Diejenigen, die sich unter diesem Emblem versammelten, begreifen sich als Ausgegrenzte, Marginalisierte, Kriminalisierte, als an den Rand der Gesellschaft Verbannte’
¹⁵² ‘Wir bekämpfen die Hierarchie, die Herrschaft von Menschen über Menschen. Dieser Kampf ist nur uns Frauen möglich, weil auch der unterdrückteste Prolet immer noch Unterdrücker seiner Frau und Kinder und jedes Mädchens auf der Straße bleibt’
shall see, neither continued to focus on women’s issues after joining the MJ2.

The members of the Blues distinguished themselves from most in the student and protest movement in Berlin because they were not reluctant to use violence. On the contrary: ‘We were militant’, explains Baumann, ‘kind of the “black bloc” of the ‘68 movement’ (Baumann and Meueler 2008: 63). A rapidly growing number of attacks against courts, police departments and US institutions between 1969 and 1970 reflects the remarkable activity of the ‘Blues’. For the most part, the actors involved limited themselves to vandalism, arson and bombings directed against objects (Neidhardt 1982: 438). Some of the groups and individuals, however, quickly radicalised further.

In July 1969, militant leftist activists from Berlin and West Germany – among them a number of future members of the MJ2 and the RAF – gathered in the small Frankish town of Ebrach to campaign for the release of a detained comrade (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 119). After the gathering, the communards Dieter Kunzelmann, Lena Conradt, Ina Siepmann, Adalbert Fichter and Georg von Rauch travelled further to Jordan and received military training in a PFLP camp (note that this was almost a year before the RAF’s first visit to a Palestinian training camp). After their return, the ‘Palästina Fraktion’ [Palestine Faction] urged the formation of an urban guerrilla group in West Berlin (Kraushaar 2006b: 518). Jointly with a few members of the ‘Blues’, they created the ‘Tupamaros West Berlin’ (TW). As the name indicates, the group sought to follow the armed struggle of the Tupamaros in Uruguay and other

153 ‘Wir waren militant gewissermaßen der schwarze Block der 68er’
revolutionary movements in the Third World. With good reason, the TW is depicted as the predecessor of the MJ2. Both organisations shared a number of structural characteristics and ideological principles: they were spontaneous, anti-intellectual and anti-elitist, pleasure-oriented and willing to resort to violence (see: Kraushaar 2006b: 528).

Like most groups associated with the ‘Blues’, the TW mainly used fire and explosives for their attacks. But their activities represented a new level of militancy in the Berlin activist scene. Jamie Trnka notes that the failed bombing of a Jewish community centre in 1969 was ‘the first and best known act by the Tupamaros West Berlin’ (Trnka 2003a: 323). Other attacks by the TW were directed against legal authorities, politicians and other public figures as well as Israeli and American institutions (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 123). The TW and other groups associated with the Blues promoted a strongly anti-Zionist position before this had gained wide currency in the radical Left (Weiss 2005: 228). As discussed in Chapter 1, the TW presented Israel as the ‘new’ fascist state and identified with the Palestinian struggle that they saw as a ‘clear and simple’ anti-fascist resistance movement (ibid.: 229). Since summer 1971, the self-identified Fedayeen were equipped with firearms (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 146).

Unlike the ‘Hash Rebels’ and other militant groups in the Berlin Underground, the TW gave up the subcultural look. Claessens and de Ahna rightly argue that ‘the loss of the look of the subcultural scene replaced by a totally “straight” appearance and carrying forged
passports’\textsuperscript{154} aroused suspicion in the Berlin Underground (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 121). Indeed, while their trimmed hair and neat clothes made it easier to pass unnoticed on the streets of Berlin, the TW provoked hostile reactions in the subcultural scene from which they had emerged (Baumann 1980: 66).

3.3.3 Formation and Disintegration of the MJ\textsubscript{2}

The police in West Berlin responded to the first activities of the RAF in 1970 with tighter controls and raids that increased the pressure on the entire Left. Several arrests and the death of the leading group member Georg von Rauch in a shootout with the police in December 1971 had a debilitating effect on the TW. To continue their armed struggle under adverse conditions, the remaining members had to join forces with other militant groups in West Berlin. After a few meetings in Berlin Kreuzberg in early 1972, Ina Siepmann, Ralf Reinders, Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, Norbert Kröcher and a few others decided to form the MJ\textsubscript{2} (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 168-169, Wunschik 2006: 548). Allegedly, it was Ina Siepmann who came up with the idea to call the group ‘Movement of June 2’ (ibid.). According to Baumann, the group chose the name to commemorate Ohnesorg and to remind everybody that the police ‘shot first’ [den ersten Schuss abgefeuert hat] (Baumann 1980: 100). The name also indicates that the group identified as part of a broader political movement, which emerged in West Berlin after the Ohnesorg murder.

\textsuperscript{154} ‘[d]er Verlust des ‘scene look’, eingetauscht gegen ein ‘total straight’- Aussehen und die Ausrüstung mit falschen Pässen’
The MJ2 wanted to do a number of things differently from the ‘Baader-Meinhof’ group, whose activities they had followed closely. Unlike the RAF, the MJ2 did not claim to be a revolutionary avant-garde. Rather, they identified with the proletarian youth subcultures in Berlin. Wunschik observes that – contrary to the self-fashioning of the MJ2 – more than a few members originated in privileged families and were university students (Wunschik 2006: 533). Georg von Rauch and Thomas Weisbecker, for instance, were sons of renowned professors; Werner Sauber’s father was a Swiss millionaire (ibid.). Still, unlike the RAF, the MJ2 was clearly not dominated by former and actual university students (Groebel and Feger 1982: 415). Since the MJ2 recruited its members mostly in the Berlin Underground, the group was as colourful as this diverse scene; members included former students, ‘workers, freaks, drug addicts and members of the lumpenproletariat’¹⁵⁵ (Rabert 1995: 187). Rather than political ideas, the founding members of the MJ2 shared the subcultural lifestyle associated with the Berlin Underground.

As they did in the commune movement and in other threads of the Berlin Underground, women played an active part in the MJ2. Previous research suggests that they constituted almost 40% of group members (Jäger et al. 1981: 24) and had as much influence in the group as their male comrades (Groebel and Feger 1982: 430). Like men in the MJ2, female group members came from a range of social backgrounds. With Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, Ina Siepmann and Gabriele Rollnik, several women in the MJ2 had a background in the educated middle-class. Siepmann’s father was a pharmacist, Rollnik’s father a police officer, and

¹⁵⁵ ‘Arbeitern, Ausgeflippten, Drogensüchtigen und Angehörigen des Lumpenproletariat’
all three had studied at university before they joined the armed struggle. After quitting her studies, Siepmann played an active role in the commune movement and joined the hash rebels (Wunschik 2006: 533). Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann studied sociology in Bochum and Berlin before she and her husband joined militant leftist circles in Berlin (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 74). Both women were founding members of the MJ2. Like Kröcher-Tiedemann, Rollnik studied sociology in Bochum and Berlin (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004). In 1973, she got to know Till Meyer and other members of the MJ2, and soon she decided to join the group (ibid.).

Other women in the group came from less privileged backgrounds and were not university educated. Verena Becker, Gudrun Stürmer and Inge Viett had left school without the Abitur (German equivalent to the English A-Levels). Before joining the MJ2, Becker had been working in a meat factory, and Stürmer abandoned two apprenticeships (Wunschik 2006: 534). One of the best-documented biographies in the MJ2 is that of Inge Viett. Born in 1944, Viett grew up in poverty. Gravely neglected by her mother, she spent a few years in an orphanage and was finally given to foster parents.\textsuperscript{156} In her autobiography, the former MJ2 member mentions that she experienced repeated abuse and an attempted rape in this period of her life (ibid.: 36, 44-45). As a teenager, she ran away from her foster family (ibid.: 50). At a young age, she realised that she was lesbian. After completing her basic education at a school with a focus on housekeeping, Viett studied to become a gymnastics teacher but left the college without a degree. In the following years, she worked as a pole

\textsuperscript{156} HIS, KOK 08/002, BKA report about Inge Viett.
dancer, courier, maid and in a range of other jobs in different cities (ibid.: 68). Attracted by the student and protest movement and the subcultural scene, the young woman moved to West Berlin in 1968. Soon she felt drawn into radical leftist circles. In the early 1970s, Viett executed her first militant actions.\textsuperscript{157} In spring 1972, she joined the MJ2. Few group members were as convinced of and committed to the armed struggle as Viett. Until the dissolution of the group in 1980, she was a driving force in the MJ2. Then she joined the RAF.

In the late 1970s, political differences among the members of the MJ2 became an increasing source of tension. The trigger for the internal conflict was a falling-out over the events during the ‘German Autumn’ in 1977 (Carini 2008: 215). A ‘populist wing’ of the MJ2, which consisted of Fritz Defuel, Gerald Lopper, Ralf Reinders and Ronald Fritzsch, disapproved of the deliberate shooting of civilians by the second generation of the RAF. In an interview in 1978, the members of the populist wing of the MJ2 condemned the hijacking of an airplane in October 1977 and other RAF attacks as ‘anti-grass roots’ [volksfeindlich] (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 122). They defended the idea of the ‘fun’-guerrilla and insisted that the armed struggle in West Germany could succeed only with humour and provocation. Inge Viett, Till Meyer, Andreas Vogel and others in the MJ2, however, criticised a lack of seriousness in the group (Overath 1991: 146). They formed an ‘internationalist wing’ of the MJ2, which gravitated increasingly towards the anti-imperialist, internationalist course of the RAF.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
The internal discord between the internationalist and the populist wing of the MJ2 reached a peak in June 1980, when Gabriele Rollnik, Angelika Goder and Gudrun Stürmer declared in the name of the entire group: ‘We dissolve the MJ2 as an organisation, and continue the anti-imperialist struggle in and as the RAF’ (Die Bewegung 2. Juni 1980). The short statement included a sharp critique of the populist and pleasure-oriented approach of the MJ2. Now, the group claimed that the uncompromising struggle of the RAF constituted the only possible means of fighting against West European and US imperialism. The fact that members of the populist wing of the MJ2 denied the statement immediately after its release indicates that the political differences between the two factions in the group had become unbridgeable.

3.4 Ideology

When asked to elaborate on a document known as the ‘Official Programme’ of the MJ2 in an interview in 1992, Fritzsch and Reinders broke out in laughter. Whilst emphasising that the document gave a fair impression of the group’s discussions in the early 1970s, the founding members of the MJ2 declared that they did not know the author of the text (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 38). The text, which does not include a single reference or theoretical argument, is an open call for revolutionary violence in West Germany to ‘smash the rule of pigs over humans’ and to show solidarity with guerrilla movements all over the world (Der Blues

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158 ‘Wir lösen die Bewegung 2. Juni als Organisation auf und führen in der RAF – als RAF – den antiimperialistischen Kampf weiter’
159 ‘das Zerschlagen der Herrschaft der Schweine über die Menschen’
Reinders and Fritzsch claim that they learned about the ‘Official Programme’ document in prison and ‘pissed themselves laughing’\textsuperscript{160} when the court tried to use it as evidence in their trial (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 39).

For two reasons, this anecdote is characteristic of the MJ2. First, it illustrates that theoretical reflections and ideological statements were clearly no priority of the group. Gerd Koenen argues that, ‘[w]hen they took positions beyond their sporadic flyers and claims of responsibility, which was extremely rare, these statements were characterised by an ideological mix of communism, Maoism and anarchism’\textsuperscript{161} (Koenen 2001: 370-371). Indeed, most group members identified as anarchists, at least in a broad sense of the term, others as Stalinists, but all were clearly more interested in practising the armed struggle than theorising about it (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 39). Secondly, the anecdote indicates that at least some members of the MJ2 took the revolution not too seriously. Contrary to the RAF, the founding members of the group argued that the armed struggle could and should be fun for the actors involved.

In 1978, members of the self-declared ‘fun’ guerrilla explained their philosophy as follows: ‘The not yet universally understood principle of the “Fun” guerrilla is that life should be fun. And, the revolutionary struggle has to be fun, because otherwise no-one would engage in it’\textsuperscript{162} (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 129). On the one hand, fun was a vested

\textsuperscript{160} ‘Wir haben uns bepißt vor Lachen’

\textsuperscript{161} ‘Wenn sie (sehr selten) über ihre sporadischen Flugblätter und Aktionseinschätzungen hinaus irgendwelche Papiere und ’Positionen’ produzierten, dann mit dem dazu passenden Ideologiemix von Linkskommunismus, Maoismus und Anarchismus’

\textsuperscript{162} ‘Es ist aber das noch nicht allseits verstandene Prinzip der Spaßguerilla, daß das Leben Spaß machen soll. Und daß der revolutionäre Kampf Spaß machen muß, weil ihn sonst keiner führt’
interest to the members of the MJ2. On the other hand, they wanted to use humour to entertain and convince the people. The most famous attempts to put this principle into practice were probably two bank robberies by members of the MJ2 in July 1975, during which the perpetrators offered ‘revolutionary marshmallows’ [revolutionäre Negerküsse] to the customers and employees (Rabert 1995: 191). In the claim of responsibility, the group perkily depicted the two attacks as their ‘modest contribution to the economic stimulus plan of the West German government’ (Der Blues gesammelte Texte der Bewegung 2. Juni: 171). For the most part, the sporadic statements by the MJ2 feature the slang of the Berlin Underground and tended to be as provocative and ironic as their ‘stimulus plan’.

When asked about internal hierarchies in an interview in 1978, Ronald Fritzsch and Ralf Reinders claimed half jokingly, half seriously: ‘In the MJ2, women oppress men, proletarians oppress students and the other way around’ (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 120). In his autobiography, Till Meyer made a similar statement. According to Meyer, the group laughed when their hostage Peter Lorenz asked to talk to their ‘boss’ and informed the man: ‘In our group, there is no such thing as a chief’ (Meyer 2008: 28). Autobiographical accounts by female members of the MJ2 indicate that they felt equal to their male comrades in every respect (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004, Viett 1997). ‘There was no chief in our...

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163 Literally translated, the German word ‘Negerkuss’ means ‘Negro-Kiss’. Whilst identifying with ‘Negroes’, ‘Jews’ and other oppressed groups, it seems that Baumann and other members of the MJ2 paid no attention to the controversial nature of the terminology they used.

164 ‘Beim 2. Juni unterdrücken die Frauen die Männer und die Proleten die Studenten, sowie umgekehrt’

165 ‘Einen Chef, so etwas gibt es bei uns nicht’
clan’\textsuperscript{166} asserts Gabriele Rollnik (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 23). Viett commends in her autobiography ‘the vehement development of the autonomy of us women’\textsuperscript{167} (Viett 1997: 176).

Previous research suggests that the power structure in the group was indeed ‘considerably more balanced’\textsuperscript{168} than relations in the RAF (Groebel and Feger 1982: 413). Wunschik goes as far as to claim that women long set the agenda in the MJ2 and that Siepmann and Viett were key members of the group (Wunschik 2006: 556). Jo Groebel and Hubert Feger come to a similar conclusion and acknowledge an equality between men and women even ‘when it came down to “hard” activities’\textsuperscript{169} such as armed attacks (Groebel and Feger 1982: 415). However, even if MJ2 statements occasionally mentioned women’s issues, the group did not have a feminist agenda. In an interview in 1997, Viett stressed this point clearly: ‘None of us had a background in the feminist scene. [...] We did not deliberately choose to go through a process of liberation as women [...] We simply made a decision and then we fought and did the same things as men. For us, that was no man-woman question. Underground, the old role models were irrelevant to us’\textsuperscript{170} (Diewald-Kerkmann 2007). Viett’s statement indicates that, like female RAF members, women in the MJ2 wanted to be equal to their male comrades in every regard, but they did not identify as feminists.

\textsuperscript{166}‘Bei uns gab es keinen Häuptling’
\textsuperscript{167}‘die vehemente Entfaltung der Eigenständigkeit von uns Frauen’
\textsuperscript{168}‘wesentlich ausgeglichener’
\textsuperscript{169}‘bei ‘harten’ Aktivitäten’
\textsuperscript{170}‘Wir sind alle nicht aus der feministischen Bewegung gekommen [...] Wir haben nicht bewusst so einen Frauenbefreiungsprozess für uns durchleben wollen [...] Wir haben uns einfach entschieden, und wir haben dann gekämpft und dieselben Dinge getan wie die Männer. Es war für uns keine Frage Mann-Frau. Das alte Rollenverständnis hat für uns in der Illegalität keine Rolle gespielt.’
While the formation of the MJ2 was clearly inspired by the armed struggle of the RAF, the members of the MJ2 rejected the ‘rigid’ approach (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 24), the elitism and the centralised structure of the RAF (Viehmann et al. 1980, Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 36). The concept of the ‘fun guerrilla’ was supposed to constitute an alternative to the RAF – a less hierarchical and less cerebral but equally militant network that appealed to the youth and to the working class. It seems that overall the structure of the MJ2 was indeed less centralised and more dynamic than that of the RAF (Groebel and Feger 1982: 430). Evidence suggests that the MJ2 was organised in small sub-groups of three to nine people that acted mostly autonomously (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 156). The members of each group made joint decisions about their targets (ibid.: 148). Apart from structural principles, the different sub-groups shared an under-theorised belief in a ‘proletarian approach’ to violence.

Like the RAF in its early stages, the founding members of the MJ2 put great hope in the revolutionary potential of workers and young people who saw no perspective for themselves in the existing political and economic order. But, contrary to the RAF’s founders, the members of the MJ2 identified as part of the oppressed class that they wanted to mobilise. In their autobiographies, several group members describe the poverty, discrimination and violence that they experienced from an early age – in the family (Baumann 1980: 92, Viett 1997: 15 ff), in school (Meyer 2008: 232-233), and as grown-ups (Viett 1997: 68). For two reasons, these experiences were acutely relevant for the ‘proletarian approach’ to violence that the MJ2 promoted.
Firstly, individual experiences of violence served members of the MJ2 as a justification for violent attacks. The group presented its attacks as a response to and defence against the discrimination and violence that individual group members and entire parts of society experienced at the hands of the state and its institutions. As mentioned previously, Baumann compared the hostility and aggression that he and others experienced as members of the Berlin Underground to the oppression of Jews and African Americans. Not only did the MJ2 argue that had ‘they’ (i.e. the police) ‘shot first’, the group also claimed that state violence and repression had reached such a high level that a targeted use of violence was perfectly justified and necessary to fight back. In this context, ‘targeted’ means that acts of violence were justified if, and only if, they were directed against the ‘class enemy’ and not against ordinary citizens.

Secondly, the group assumed that because of its origins in the Berlin Underground and the class background of its members, it would have a more ‘natural’ approach to violence than the RAF. Baumann uses Baader’s rescue as an example to show that the RAF used violence ‘irrationally’ and in inappropriate situations (Baumann 1980: 92). According to Baumann, the RAF’s recourse to violence was the result of complex theoretical considerations and abstract thinking rather than intuition, which it was in the MJ2 (ibid.). He was convinced that the MJ2 had a ‘healthier’ relation to violence, because many group members had to cope with violence throughout their lives and had learned to respond to violent confrontations ‘readily’ and ‘spontaneously’ (ibid.: 92-93).
3.5 Activities

With a less rigid group structure and a different approach to violence, the MJ2 wanted to create a popular alternative to the RAF. To some extent, the activities of the MJ2 reflect the group’s self-conception as a ‘hands on’ and ‘fun’ guerrilla. As mentioned in Chapter 1, previous research suggests that the majority of the attacks by members of the MJ2 targeted property. Whilst 44.7% of RAF attacks between 1968 and 1980 were directed against persons, this applies only to 16.9% of MJ2 strikes in the same period (Neidhardt 1982: 438). The MJ2 focused on attacks against property, because these tended to be more popular than attacks against people and involved smaller risks for the actors involved (e.g. shorter prison terms in case of arrest). Still, the MJ2 did not manage to avoid casualties. Quite the contrary, ‘the activities of the fun guerrilla quickly became bloody serious’\footnote{\textit{aus der Spassguerilla wurde schnell blutiger Ernst}} (Aust 2002: 29).

Due to their spontaneous approach to violence, a number of attacks by the MJ2 were poorly planned and ill-considered. Contrary to original planning, one of the first attacks by the group, the bombing of a British Yacht club in Berlin in February 1972, claimed the life of an innocent civilian, the boat builder Erwin Beelitz (Claessens and Ahna 1982: 154). In June 1974, members of the MJ2 decided without consultation with other group members to execute their former comrade-in-arms Ulrich Schmücker as they suspected that he had cooperated with the police (for a detailed discussion of the case, see Aust 2002). On 10 November 1974, the MJ2 killed the Berlin judge Günter von Drenkmann during an attempted abduction. Rather than acknowledging the fatal
mistake, the group released two statements in which they depicted von Drenkmann as a class enemy and presented his killing as an act of ‘revenge’ for the death of RAF member Holger Meins on 9 November 1974. Both the execution of Schmücker and the killing of von Drenkmann aroused harsh criticism in the leftist movement in Berlin and forced all actors involved underground (Rabert 1995: 188).

Like the RAF, the MJ2 evolved soon after its formation into an underground organisation whose activities focused increasingly on logistics and the liberation of detained group members. To pay for weapons, forged documents, secret flats and other parts of its illegal structure, the group robbed dozens of banks in West Berlin and other cities. On several occasions, the MJ2 collaborated with the RAF and other militant groups to meet logistical challenges (Wunschik 2006). In 1977, members of the MJ2 abducted the Austrian entrepreneur Walter Palmers and obtained a 4,300,000 DM ransom, which they shared in part with the RAF and with Palestinian fighters (Wunschik 2006: 553). The greatest ‘coup’ in the history of the MJ2 was beyond doubt the abduction of the CDU politician Peter Lorenz in February 1975, which I discuss below. Previous and later attempts to enforce the release of detained members of militant leftist groups, however, failed. Over the long term, the lifestyle and spirit of the Berlin Underground proved irreconcilable with the armed struggle that the MJ2 advocated.

When going into hiding, members of the MJ2 saw themselves forced to abandon the ostentatious style they had cultivated as part of the Berlin Underground. ‘To avoid suspicion’, explains Gabriele Rollnik who
joined the MJ2 in 1974, ‘we adopted a bourgeois appearance’\textsuperscript{172} (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 25). This implied that they had to wear wigs or change their hairstyle and wear neat, respectable clothing. It seems that Baumann and other men in the group were far from pleased about this ‘boutique chic’ (Baumann 1980: 82). They had to cut the long hair that had become an essential part of their self-expression and – at least according to Baumann – of their sex appeal (Baumann 1980: 19). According to Rollnik, the group was surprised about the success of its masquerade. ‘We were continually disguised [...] you think that everybody would notice that you are wearing a wig or that someone is wearing a glued-on beard, but nobody does’\textsuperscript{173} (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 35). And, members of the MJ2 wore a lot of wigs. According to an internal report, police authorities confiscated as many as ten wigs in a car that members of the MJ2 had used in 1975.\textsuperscript{174}

Like the RAF, the MJ2 repeatedly used femininity as camouflage to prepare and commit attacks. The gendered performances of the perpetrators during the kidnapping of Peter Lorenz that I discuss in the case study include an example of such a tactical recourse to femininity. The previously mentioned liberation of Till Meyer by Viett and other women in May 1978 can be understood as another use of femininity as camouflage in the history of the MJ2. Moreover, a police report on a series of 10 robberies between November 1971 and October 1972 for which the MJ2 was held responsible strongly indicates that the group

\textsuperscript{172} ‘Um nicht aufzufallen haben wir uns ein bürgerliches Aussehen gegeben’

\textsuperscript{173} ‘Wir waren ganz oft verkleidet. Du siehst dich selbst als verkleidet und denkst, das fällt jedem auf, dass das eine Perücke ist oder: der hat den Bart angeklebt, das sieht doch jeder. Aber es sieht keiner. Es fällt nicht auf.’

\textsuperscript{174} HIS, SAK 410, 03, 06.
preferred women drivers. The ten robberies were executed by groups of two to five people; and women participated in nine of ten attacks. While they were directly involved in no more than three robberies, women drove the getaway cars in at least seven cases. While, of course, there are many possible reasons for such a gendered division of labour (e.g. the skills, preferences and fears of individual members), Inge Viett’s account indicates that one important reason for the group preferring women drivers was that they aroused less suspicion than men.

While members of the MJ2 acted and dressed according to conventional gender norms when interacting with outsiders, they made a strenuous and conscious effort to avoid hierarchies and traditional gender norms within the group. Although there is evidence that more experienced members set the agenda in the MJ2 (Wunschik 2006: 557), the aspiration of the group was that ‘everybody should be able to do anything’ (Baumann 1980: 106). In an interview with the author of this thesis, a former group member explained: ‘There were no male or female jobs in our group – even cooking was mostly done collectively’. Autobiographical accounts by other group members and the data examined in the case study support this claim. In her autobiography, Viett claims ‘we women made sure that the group did not slip into or reinforce a gendered division of work, activities or other aspects of life’ (Viett 1997: 184). Gabriele Rollnik and other group members have expressed

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similar views (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 120, Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 23). Yet the gendered performances during the kidnapping of Peter Lorenz also illustrate that the MJ2 could not simply break with the prevailing gender norms.

3.6 Case Study: The Abduction of Peter Lorenz in February 1975

3.6.1 The Context

On 2 March 1975, citizens of West Berlin went to the polls to elect the Senate and Mayor of the city. On that day, Peter Lorenz aimed to become the first Christian Democrat mayor of the city. Since 1946, the city had been ruled by the Social Democrat Party of Germany (SPD) (‘Damit es besser werde...’ 1975), and the SPD had held the absolute majority in the city council for several terms (Kinnigkeit 1975). The Berlin born lawyer Peter Lorenz was determined to break this majority. A member of the Christian Democrat Union (CDU) since 1945 and in local government since 1954, Lorenz became vice president of the Abgeordnetenhaus (West Berlin senate) in 1967. In the elections in 1971, he ran for mayor for the first time. While the CDU achieved better results than in previous years, the SPD defended its absolute majority in the city council and Lorenz’s opponent Klaus Schütz remained the ruling mayor. In 1975, Lorenz challenged Schütz for a second time. Opinions in Berlin and West Germany diverged on the question of whether ‘this friendly man with the horn-rimmed glasses’, as Chancellor Helmut Schmidt referred to Lorenz during an election rally, had what it takes to become a political leader. The West German magazine Stern referred to him as ‘a face that does not
stick in the mind [...] An honest politician, but a man without particular stature\textsuperscript{179} (‘Das Protokoll der Entscheidung. Die Entführung’ 1975). Other critics argued that Lorenz was too similar to the acting mayor Klaus Schütz to offer a viable alternative to the electorate (see, e.g. Nawrocki 1975, Engert 1975, Stiege 1975).

In the eyes of the MJ2, Peter Lorenz was a class enemy, responsible for ‘pressure on industrial workers, surveillance at work, factory security services, anti-guerrilla groups, laws banning entry to civil service professions on political grounds, new laws regulating demonstrations, restrictions for defence lawyers, and adherence to the ban on abortions’\textsuperscript{180} (Viett 1997: 134). Moreover, the MJ2 supposed that the party leader of the CDU in West Berlin was an active supporter of Zionism and of the dictatorship in Chile (ibid.). However, the group argued that Peter Lorenz and his party were no better or worse than his competitors and their parties. From their point of view, it made no difference whether the CDU, the SPD or the Free Democratic Party (FDP) became the strongest force in Berlin on 2 March, as any major party would govern not for but ‘against the people’\textsuperscript{181} (\textit{Der Blues gesammelte Texte der Bewegung 2. Juni}: 189-190).

In the eyes of Peter Lorenz, the MJ2 and other militant leftist groups in Berlin represented a security risk. In his election campaign, he called for a determined and concerted effort to combat the activities of militant groups in West Berlin. While the acting mayor Klaus Schütz

\textsuperscript{179} ‘Gesicht ohne Erinnerungswert.[...] Ein redlicher Politiker, aber ohne besonderes Format’

\textsuperscript{180} ‘Akkordhetze und Bespitzelungen am Arbeitsplatz, für den Aufbau von Werkschutz und Anti-Guerrillagruppen, für Berufsverbote, das neue Demonstrationsrecht, Verteidigereinschränkung und für die Aufrechterhaltung des § 218’

\textsuperscript{181} ‘gegen das Volk’
assured the electorate that ‘Berlin is more secure than ever’ (SPD 1975), his opponent declared the opposite. Lorenz claimed ‘people in Berlin live in danger’ and used statistics to substantiate this statement. According to police statistics, street crime in West Berlin had increased by 29% and robberies by 44.5% from August to December 1974 (‘Berlin: Jeden Tag mehr Verbrechen’ 1975). The MJ2 had contributed its part to the crime statistics in West Berlin. Between 1972 and 1975, the group had robbed dozens of banks and killed three people. Lorenz’s election promise was to tackle domestic security by combatting street crime with a better-equipped police force and by adopting a harder line against the radical Left in West Berlin (‘Das Protokoll der Entscheidung, Die Entführung’ 1975). His slogan was ‘more vigour brings more security’. In a newspaper advertisement, Lorenz declared that as acting Mayor he would make sure ‘that the police will be in the right place again – so that criminals have no advantage; and political terrorists even less so’.

During an election campaign rally in early February, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt made fun of Lorenz’s securitarianism. ‘Apparently, he is scared in his house at night. He hears strange sounds’, and Schmidt added jokingly that it was probably Lorenz’s party colleague Lummer who made the noise (‘Helmut Schmidts Pointe’ 1975). Schmidt could not know that in fact Peter Lorenz had every reason to be worried: for several

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182 ‘Berlin ist heute so sicher wie noch nie’
183 ‘Berliner leben gefährlich’
184 ‘Mehr Tatkraft schafft mehr Sicherheit’ ‘dass die Polizei wieder an der richtigen Stelle steht – damit Verbrecher keinen Vorsprung haben. Und politische Terroristen erst recht nicht’
185 ‘dass die Polizei wieder an der richtigen Stelle steht – damit Verbrecher keinen Vorsprung haben. Und politische Terroristen erst recht nicht’
186 ‘Er muss sich offenbar nachts in seiner Wohnung ängstigen. Er hört da unbekannte Geräusche’
weeks, the MJ2 had been conducting a reconnaissance of his property in Berlin Zehlendorf. According to one of the actors involved, the group used five different cars and a motorbike for the observation and acquired a dog to take for walks in the exclusive residential area (Meyer 2008: 341). Then, three days before the elections, a group of three to five MJ2-members kidnapped the mayoral candidate on his way to work.

The abduction of Peter Lorenz is a landmark in the history of political violence in post-WWII Germany for a number of reasons. Firstly, this was the first politically motivated abduction in the Federal Republic of Germany.187 Secondly, for the first and last time, the West German state gave in to the demands of a militant leftist group. Thirdly, to this day the abduction of Peter Lorenz remains the only politically motivated kidnapping that had a ‘happy ending’.

Past and future hostage-takings by members of militant West German groups all ended tragically. The MJ2 killed the president of the Berlin Supreme Court, Günter von Drenkmann, during an attempt to kidnap him at his house in Berlin on 10 November 1974. In April 1975, five men and one woman from the RAF stormed the German embassy in Stockholm and took several hostages to enforce the release of detained group members. The hostage-takers executed two people and threatened to kill more, but the German government refused to meet their demands. On 27 June 1976, a group composed of several PFLP fighters and two founding members of the RC hijacked an Israeli airplane on the way from Tel Aviv to Paris to achieve the same objective. In early July, Israeli troops stormed the airplane after it had stopped in Entebbe (Uganda) to liberate

the hostages; and dozens of people were killed in the course of the operation. During the ‘German Autumn’ in 1977, the RAF abducted the president of the German Association of Employers [Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie], Hanns-Martin Schleyer, to force the release of the leading group members. Once state authorities had made unmistakably clear that they would not meet the demands of the kidnappers, they executed the hostage.

A fourth significant feature of the abduction of Peter Lorenz was the way in which the perpetrators made effective use of gendered stereotypes to initiate the attack. While the existing body of literature on the abduction deals with the first three aspects, none of the previous publications elaborates on the gendered performances of the kidnappers. Based on Peter Lorenz’ detailed testimonies and police reports (found at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research), police correspondence from the Federal Archives in Koblenz and autobiographical accounts by former group members, this case study offers a detailed analysis of the gendered interactions during the attack.

3.6.2 The Attack

For more than six months, the MJ2 had been preparing the abduction of a public figure in West Berlin to enforce the release of detained comrades. Their plan was to confine the hostage in a secret hideout in West Berlin until state officials met their demands.\(^{188}\) In August 1974, MJ2 member Gabriele Rollnik found a suitable property in Berlin Kreuzberg. She asked

\(^{188}\) Due to Berlin’s insular geo-political position, it would have been difficult to bring the hostage unnoticed to other cities in West Germany.
a female friend to sign a tenancy agreement for her and registered a second hand shop in the commercial register. In the following months, Rollnik sold and bought clothes in a store in the rented flat, while other group members set up a secure and sound-insulated area in the cellar of the house. The group referred to this prison as ‘Volksgefängnis’ [people’s prison], because they were convinced that their actions were directed against enemies of the people.

Initially, the MJ2 wanted to use their secret prison to confine the president of the Superior Court of Justice in Berlin, Günter von Drenkmann. According to one of the actors involved, the MJ2 sourced the weapons for the kidnapping from members of the Revolutionary Cell and from the militant Italian group *Brigate Rosse* (Meyer 2008: 338). After killing the judge, the group had to look for a new target. For a while, they toyed with the idea of kidnapping the entrepreneur Karl-Heinz Pepper, but finally settled on Lorenz because the election campaign had recently commenced (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 63).

In order to initiate the attack on Peter Lorenz, the MJ2 effectively used femininity as camouflage (for a detailed discussion of this tactic, see Case Study in Chapter 2). On 27 February 1975, Peter Lorenz left home a bit later than on most days. At 8.50am, he left his villa in Zehlendorf, a wealthy district of Berlin. When Lorenz’s driver Sowa drove along the Quermatenweg, a calm road at the edge of the Grunewald forest, he had to stop abruptly as a manoeuvring truck temporarily blocked the road. While he was waiting for the truck to leave, a red Fiat crashed into the...
back of the stationary Mercedes. According to Sowa, the driver of the Fiat was a blond woman in her mid-twenties.\textsuperscript{191} Seemingly shocked by the accident, the young woman remained in the car.

Autobiographical accounts by former group members indicate that the MJ2 had deliberately chosen a woman for this task. According to Inge Viett, the driver of the Fiat looked harmless, helpless, and all alone (Viett 1997: 129). Sowa stepped out of the vehicle to inspect the damage. Gabriele Rollnik, who also participated in the attack remembers that Sowa asked the driver of the Fiat in a jovial tone ‘Well, young lady. What have we done here?’\textsuperscript{192} (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 34). Occupied with the accident and the woman in the red car, Sowa, who was an experienced judo fighter, did not notice as somebody approached him from behind (‘Das Protokoll der Entscheidung. Die Entführung’ 1975). A male group member incapacitated him with a blow on the back of his head.\textsuperscript{193}

The entire raid on Lorenz’s car took no longer than 210 seconds (‘Das Protokoll der Entscheidung. Die Entführung’ 1975). Shortly after Sowa was hit, the doors of the black Mercedes flew open, and a man tried to grab Peter Lorenz. The politician cried for help and tried to defend himself against the intruder with all his strength. Even after a second person had pulled a hood over his head and tied his hands, his resistance remained so fierce that he broke the front window screen.\textsuperscript{194} To immobilise the hostage, one kidnapper jumped on his lap and told him

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{191} Ibid., p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{192} ‘Na, junge Frau, was haben wir denn da angestellt?’
\item \textsuperscript{193} According to the kidnappers, they knocked Sowa unconscious with a covered metal tube that looked like a road sweeping broom (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 62, Viett 1997: 130).
\item \textsuperscript{194} HIS, SAK 33 1 BJ2 20/75 SAO 66, ‘Zweite Befragung des Herrn Peter Lorenz’, p. 4-5.
\end{itemize}
that they would not hesitate to kill him if he continued to resist. Then, the kidnappers drove away in Lorenz’s car, the red Fiat and a third vehicle.

On the road, a woman tore Lorenz’s trousers and underpants apart and shot two injections of sedatives into his body – one in his arm and one in his left leg.\textsuperscript{195} After a journey of less than 15 minutes, the group stopped in a parking garage in Berlin Charlottenburg, where they forced the dazed hostage to step into the trunk of another vehicle (Meyer 2008: 344). With the 1.85m tall handcuffed and blindfolded politician cramped into the trunk of a Volkswagen Golf, they continued their journey. At 9.30am, they stopped again, and the hostage had to step into a wooden trunk in the back of a truck, in which they drove to their final destination (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 74). Unnoticed by a group of neighbours who were chatting in front of the house, four kidnappers carried the heavy wooden trunk with Peter Lorenz into the shop and took him into the ‘people’s prison’ in the cellar of the house (ibid.: 74-75).

In interviews with police officers and with journalists in the days after his release, Peter Lorenz gave a detailed account of his experiences in this prison. The only source of light in the cell was a painted light bulb behind the heavy red curtains and the chicken wire that separated the prison from the rest of the cellar.\textsuperscript{196} The entire cell was no bigger than seven square meters. It contained a camping bed with a pillow and a blanket, a grey table, a grey chair, a shelf and a chemical toilet.\textsuperscript{197} The kidnappers had even provided the Volksgefängnis with a towel, a

\textsuperscript{195} BAK, B 106 / 106997, dpp- telefax, 5 March 1975.
\textsuperscript{196} HIS, SAK 33 1 BJ2 20/75 SAO 66, ‘Zweite Befragung des Herrn Peter Lorenz’, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{197} HIS, Ur/34, court ruling against Reinders, Fritzsch, Teufel, Klöpper, Meyer and Vogel, p. 55-56.
toothbrush, a bar of soap and deodorant. Somewhere behind the curtains, a TV and a radio were playing on low volume. Peter Lorenz heard people whispering, but he could not understand what was said. When the curtain opened, he could catch a glimpse of the room. He noticed the wooden stairs that led up to the shop, a round table and a Che Guevara poster on the wall.¹⁹⁸

Peter Lorenz had been in captivity before. During WWII, he had been sent as a tank crewman to Poland and Russia. In 1945, he had been captured by the Russians, but managed to escape and made his way back to Berlin. The two women and five men involved in his kidnapping were too young to have personal memories of WWII,¹⁹⁹ but they were convinced that they were fighting a class war. In a pamphlet released shortly after the abduction, the group claimed that they were no ‘petty bourgeois freaks’. ‘We all know what it is to work in factories; several group members have not even finished secondary school, not to mention university’²⁰⁰ (Der Blues gesammelte Texte der Bewegung 2. Juni: 176). Lorenz, on the contrary, originated from a wealthy family, had a university degree and worked as a notary (Engert 1975). Based on documents that they found in his bag, the kidnappers concluded that he earned more than 20,000 DM per month (Der Blues gesammelte Texte der Bewegung 2. Juni: 189). Due to his social background and income, Peter Lorenz was a class enemy in the eyes of his captors.

¹⁹⁹ There is proof that Inge Viett, Gabriele Rollnik, Till Meyer, Andreas Vogel, Ralf Reinders, Ronald Fritzsch and Gerald Klöpper were involved in the kidnapping, but it is likely that other group members also played supporting roles in the abduction.
²⁰⁰ ‘wir sind keine ausgeflippten kleinbürger. jeder von uns weiß, was fabrikarbeit ist, einige haben nicht einmal hauptschulabschluss, geschweige denn studiert’
Whenever the kidnappers opened the curtains to Peter Lorenz’s cell, they wore wide blue overalls and masks. Their masks consisted of a square-shaped white pillowcase. Apart from mouth and eyes, these masks covered the entire head (for examples, see Images 7 and 8 on the following page). Due to the square-shaped head, the figures behind the chicken wire reminded the hostage of robots.\textsuperscript{201} Since all kidnappers looked identical,\textsuperscript{202} Peter Lorenz found it hard to keep individual group members apart.

\textit{Images 7 and 8: Police Photographs of Masks.}
Source: HIS SAK 410, 03, 07.

The only body parts that they exposed to the hostage were their hands. As the politician reported later to the police: ‘All of them had

\textsuperscript{201} HIS, SAK 33 1 BJ2 20/75 SAO 66, ‘Zweite Befragung des Herrn Peter Lorenz’, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{202} According to Lorenz, one kidnapper wore a bobble cap instead of a white mask. He falsely associated this disguise with one particular woman. In fact, the kidnappers shared all masks, and the hostage has probably seen several people with the same mask.
hands that showed that they had done physical labour"\textsuperscript{203}. This remark was not only the most explicit comment that the hostage made about class differences between himself and the kidnappers, it also illustrates how class is inscribed on the body. Initially, Lorenz could distinguish between male and female kidnappers only when he heard them speaking or coughing. After his release, he reported to the police that the kidnappers spoke little but coughed a lot. Apparently, some of them had caught a cold during the ride in the Mercedes with the broken front screen and then shared their germs by sharing their masks with other group members.\textsuperscript{204}

At 9.15 am on 27 February 1975, a courier delivered a communiqué at the German Press Agency in Berlin, in which the MJ2 claimed responsibility for the kidnapping.\textsuperscript{205} The kidnappers promised to treat the hostage better than the police treated ‘the 60,000 prisoners in state prisons’, but made it clear that they would interrogate Peter Lorenz about his ‘economic relations with leaders of fascist regimes’ (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 78). The group made four demands. Firstly, they demanded the immediate release of all people who had been arrested in the context of a demonstration after the death of the RAF member Holger Meins in November 1974. Secondly, they demanded that five detained members of the MJ2 as well as RAF co-founder Horst Mahler should be released from prison. They wanted the police to hand 20,000 DM to each of their comrades and to provide a fully fuelled Boeing 707, in which the three men and three women could fly out of the country. To ensure the safety of their comrades, the MJ2 requested that the pastor and former

\textsuperscript{203}`Die hatten also alle Hände, die von Arbeit zeugten’ (ibid.)
\textsuperscript{204} HIS, SAK 33 1 BJ2 20/75 SAO 66, ‘Erste Befragung des Herrn Peter L o r e n z’, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{205} BAK, B 106/106997, dpa telefax 28 February 1975.
mayor of Berlin Heinrich Albertz should accompany the group on the flight. Thirdly, the kidnappers demanded the publication of their communiqué in 12 local and national newspapers. Finally, they ordered the police to make no attempt to find their whereabouts. To lend emphasis to their demands, the group attached a photograph of the hostage to the letter. On the following day, one day before the elections, the photograph of Peter Lorenz was on the title pages of newspapers in Berlin and West Germany. The eight-by-eight centimetre photograph showed a tired and disheartened man – an image that stood in striking contrast to the billboard posters all over Berlin (see Images 9 and 10).

**Image 9: Election Poster with Picture of Peter Lorenz (left)**

**Image 10: The Hostage Peter Lorenz (right)**
The interrogation of the hostage, which the MJ2 had announced in its first communiqué, went differently than the group had expected. Equipped with a voice recorder, two men and one woman tried to question Peter Lorenz about his income, his view on international politics, and his plans for Berlin. The hostage experienced the questioning by the group as a ‘sophisticated seminar discussion’ rather than an interrogation. He responded to some questions but refused to answer others; and the kidnappers did not force him to respond to their questions. Inge Viett was frustrated about the poor results of the interrogation. She felt that Lorenz was ‘unable to understand causal links and global relationships’. ‘When we confronted him with both’, she claimed, ‘he remained silent and seemed perplexed and clueless. His world has an unquestionable rightness’ (Viett 1997: 140). Although Inge Viett held very different political views, she was similarly convinced of their rightness.

While the interrogation reinforced their view of Peter Lorenz as bourgeois and provincial, the kidnappers began to see him as a human being. Ronald Fritzsch and Ralf Reinders summarised their view of the hostage after the interrogation in simple terms: ‘Wasn’t a pig any more, rather naïve’ (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 81). On his part, Peter Lorenz was becoming less scared of the kidnappers, as they seemed...
‘reasonable’\textsuperscript{209}, and he sensed that some group members might be sympathetic towards him. After crudely ignoring social conventions and etiquette during the first hours of the abduction, the captors began to acknowledge the senior status of the hostage as they got to know him better. As a result of this process, they began to address Peter Lorenz formally (i.e. they used ‘Sie’ rather than ‘Du’).\textsuperscript{210} Evidence suggests that the hostage went through a similar process. In one of the first police interrogations after his release, he referred to the men and women from the MJ2 repeatedly as ‘boys’ and ‘girls’\textsuperscript{211}. In the light of the growing familiarity, generational differences between the hostage and the kidnappers became increasingly important, and the interactions between both parties became more respectful and conventional.

Sometimes, the kidnappers asked the hostage if he was hungry, but they did not ask him what he wanted to eat. Retrospectively, the politician described the food during his captivity as ‘bürgerlich’ [home-style cuisine].\textsuperscript{212} Usually, the group had hot meals for supper and bread, butter, cheese and sausages during the day. At a press conference after his release, the mayoral candidate provided a detailed account of the suppers. On one evening, the kidnappers served roast pork, on another occasion Nasi Goreng. Peter Lorenz vividly remembered that once they brought him stew – probably without having read an interview with Marianne

\textsuperscript{209} ‘dass sich die Kidnapper ihm gegenüber [Lorenz] korrekt verhalten haben’ (source: BAK, B 106/106997, dpa telefax, 5 March 1975).
\textsuperscript{210} This development is worth noting in so far as it reverses social conventions. Senior citizens are normally addressed in the polite form (‘Sie’) until they explicitly encourage their dialogue partners to address them by their first name and informally (‘Du’).
\textsuperscript{211} ‘Mädchen’ and ‘Jungs’
\textsuperscript{212} BAK, B 106 / 106997, ddp-telefax, 5 March 1975.
Lorenz from early February, in which she stated that stew was her husband’s favourite dish (‘Fragen an die drei Damen’ 1975).

Peter Lorenz’s testimony indicates that meals were of great importance to him during his six day-long captivity. They satisfied his hunger, they provided some comfort, and they gave him a sense of time in the steady darkness of his cell. The way meals were produced in the basement in Kreuzberg, however, was very different from Lorenz’s own household and the homes of most West German families. After his release, Peter Lorenz reported to the police that he got the impression that the logistics of his abduction kept the kidnappers very busy. According to the hostage, all tasks, including the cooking, seemed to rotate among the group members. This observation confirms the claims made by male and female group members that the MJ2 indeed made a conscious effort to break with traditional gender norms. However, Lorenz’s testimony also suggests that the kidnappers did not completely avoid a gendered division of labour. One short interaction between the hostage and two group members clearly illustrates this point.

Since the kidnappers had ripped his trousers apart to inject the sedatives into his body, Peter Lorenz’s left leg was exposed to the cold. After holding out for a period that might have been a couple of hours but felt like an entire day, he asked for a needle and thread. ‘Why?’ asked the male guard. ‘I don’t want to have ragged and torn clothes on’ responded the hostage (Wagner 1975). He wanted to fix his trousers to be

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\(^{213}\) HIS, SAK 33 i BJ2 20/75 SAO 66, ‘Zweite Befragung des Herrn Peter L o r e n z’, p. 22.

\(^{214}\) ‘warum?’

\(^{215}\) ‘Ich will nicht so zerrissen und zerrumpt dastehen.’
less cold, but his request was surely also an attempt to regain his dignity in a degrading situation. The kidnapper passed him a needle and thread. For several minutes, the guard watched how Lorenz tried to fix his trousers in his dark cell. Apparently, he told the hostage ‘We have a woman here. She’ll deal with that’\textsuperscript{216} (ibid.).

The guard disappeared and came back with one of the female kidnappers. At first, she objected and said that the hostage should fix the trousers himself. But, after observing Lorenz’s unsuccessful attempts for a little while through the chicken wire, she said: ‘it won’t work like that, give it to me’\textsuperscript{217}. She took the pair of trousers and left. When she returned them a couple of hours later, the hostage was impressed with her work. ‘A big compliment’, said Peter Lorenz to the woman, ‘you make a perfect housewife’\textsuperscript{218}. Like all kidnappers, she wore a mask. Peter Lorenz could not see her face, but he could see her eyes through the holes in the mask. He felt that she was smiling. He smiled, too. The politician was pleased. His trousers looked almost as good as new, and his compliment was met with approval (Wagner 1975).

In all probability, the woman who fixed Lorenz’s trousers was Inge Viett.\textsuperscript{219} Retrospectively, she claims that she was not surprised that the CDU politician placed importance upon mending his trousers, even under such extraordinary circumstances. ‘The inner stability of conservative

\textsuperscript{216} ‘Wir haben da eine Frau. Sie wird es machen.’

\textsuperscript{217} ‘Das wird nichts. Geben Sie mal her’ (source: HIS, SAK 33 1 BJ2 20/75 SAO 66, Zweite Befragung des Herrn Peter Lorenz , p. 24),

\textsuperscript{218} ‘Ich sagte zu ihr: Ganz großes Kompliment, Sie sind ja eine perfekte Hausfrau. Da sah ich, wie ihre Augen lachten. Ich sah ihre Augen durch die Sehschlitze ihrer Maske. Auch ich hab gelacht.’

\textsuperscript{219} As mentioned previously, Gabriele Rollnik and Inge Viett were the only women who actively participated in the kidnapping. Contrary to Rollnik, Viett mentions the sewing-scene in her autobiography. Moreover, Viett was the only person among the kidnappers who had attended a school with a focus on housekeeping and who definitively knew how to sew.
characters’, argues Viett in her autobiography ‘relies to a great part on their external appearance’\(^{220}\) (Viett 1997: 137). Yet she acknowledges that the ‘inner stability’ of the hostage was in their best interest. ‘We were not interested in a mentally unstable Peter Lorenz, but in one who could actively engage with us’\(^{221}\) states the former group member (ibid.). If Lorenz’ compliment made her laugh, it was probably not because she was flattered, but because she was amused. If there was one thing that Viett wanted to avoid it was life as a housewife. Rather than at ‘home and hearth’, she found happiness in the armed struggle. Viett raved about her life in clandestinity: ‘At no point in my life have I been less scared than during this time in the underground, a place which allowed me a new, different existence outside of the ugly world. I have never been more free, never been less tied to my own responsibility than in this state of complete detachment from state authority and from social norms’\(^{222}\) (Viett 1997: 114-115).

Given the circumstances of their encounter, Inge Viett and Peter Lorenz got along well. Their ways separated in the late hours of 4 March when the kidnappers abandoned the hostage with a few pennies for a phone call on a bench in a public park in Berlin Wilmersdorf. Inge Viett shook Peter Lorenz’s hand and felt ‘a strange sense of gratitude on both sides’\(^{223}\) (Viett 1997: 141). In the second police interview after his release,

\(^{220}\) ‘Bei konservativen Charakteren baut die innere Stabilität zu einem guten Teil auf ihrer äußeren Erscheinung auf’

\(^{221}\) ‘Wir waren nicht an einem mental desolaten Peter Lorenz interessiert, sondern an einem aktiv mitdenkenden’

\(^{222}\) ‘Nie in meinem Leben war ich furchtloser als in dieser Zeit im Untergrund, dem Ort, der ein neues, anderes Sein außerhalb der häßlichen Welt gestattete. Nie war ich freier, nie war ich ungebundener an meine eigene Verantwortung als in dem Zustand völliger Abnabelung von der staatlichen Autorität und von gesellschaftlichen Vorgaben’

\(^{223}\) ‘der seltsame Dank von beiden Seiten’
Peter Lorenz mentioned a ‘fond farewell’. ‘The woman shook my hand’, reported the hostage, ‘in some corner of her revolutionary existence, she might have taken me to her heart’\(^\text{224}\). The way in which Lorenz said goodbye to his kidnappers strongly indicates that he had become quite fond of them. According to two MJ2 members, the hostage even invited the group to one of his garden parties before they left (Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 98). It remains an open question whether the abduction could have had such a happy ending if the government had refused to fulfil the demands of the kidnappers.

On 1 March 1975, two people who had been detained since the demonstration for Holger Meins were released from prison (Dahlke 2007: 656). Two days later, a Boeing with Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann, Ingrid Siepmann, Verena Becker, Rolf Heißler and Rolf Pohle, the pastor Heinrich Albertz, and several crewmembers, took off from Frankfurt airport. Apart from Horst Mahler, who had refused to be part of the exchange, all people mentioned in the communiqué were on board the plane. After tough and lengthy negotiations with state officials, the crew received permission to land in the People’s Republic of Yemen. In the afternoon of 4 March, Albertz read a public statement that included the code words for which the kidnappers waited eagerly: ‘Ein Tag so wunderschön wie heute’ [a day as beautiful as today]. In the early morning of 5 March 1975, Peter Lorenz returned home. Exhausted from six days in captivity and several hours of police questioning, he found his house in Berlin Zehlendorf surrounded by journalists. Peter Lorenz had

become a famous man, but he was still not mayor. In the elections on 2 March, the CDU had become the strongest party in the Abgeordnetenhaus. However, the lead of the conservatives was so small (43.9% of the votes for the Conservatives vs. 42.6% for the Social Democrats) that the SPD remained the ruling party by forming a coalition with the FDP.

3.6.3 Public Responses

As the only kidnapping during which state authorities negotiated publicly with the kidnappers, the abduction of Peter Lorenz is probably one of the best-documented attacks in the history of political violence in West Germany. When members of the second generation of the RAF abducted Hanns-Martin Schleyer on 5 September 1977 to force the release of the RAF founders from prison they also demanded public negotiations. However, during Schleyer’s kidnapping, all major newspapers, press agencies and TV channels adhered to a ‘Nachrichtensperre’ [news embargo] that the government declared on 6 September (Kraushaar 2007b). During Lorenz’s abduction, no such agreement was in place. As a result, local newspapers reported on the kidnapping literally from the first hours on, and soon it was breaking news in TV stations and newspapers across West Germany.

The news of the abduction of Peter Lorenz was met with shock and horror among politicians and journalists in West Germany. In the eyes of Helmut Kohl, Federal Chairman of the CDU, the kidnapping of his ‘friend’ Peter Lorenz constituted a ‘barbarian act of political vandalism’ that
reminded him of ‘the conditions in Weimar Germany’ (‘Berlin CDU-Chef entführt’ 1975). A journalist depicted the kidnappers as ‘fascists in jeans’ [Faschisten in Jeans] (Gütt 1975). The acting mayor of Berlin Peter Schütz called for solidarity among democrats from all political parties. He declared that the kidnapping was an attack that ‘not only could have hit all of us, but which did hit all of us’.226

In a crisis meeting, local politicians and state authorities decided to stop the election campaign with immediate effect but to hold elections as scheduled. The members of the crisis committee were divided about the course of action. While Helmut Schmidt, among others, claimed that the state should categorically reject the demands of the kidnappers, Klaus Schütz and Helmut Kohl made a determined effort to ensure that the demands were met (for a detailed discussion of the decision making process, see Dahlke 2007). Against the advice of the federation of German police officers, the crisis committee finally decided with a slight majority to do everything that could help to save the life of Peter Lorenz.227 This implied not only that state authorities paid the ransom, released the prisoners listed in the communiqué and provided a plane with crew to fly them out of the country, it also meant that they had to negotiate with the kidnappers in the public media.

Less than 30 minutes after Peter Lorenz’s release, the police initiated an extensive search for the perpetrators (Dahlke 2007: 668). Within a few hours, the police officers arrested 184 people and raided

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225 ‘Die Entführung unseres Freundes Peter Lorenz ist ein Akt von politischem Vandalismus, der seinesgleichen in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik nicht hat und [...] uns in eine schlimme Zeit der Weimarer Republik zurückführt’
227 BAK, B 106/106997, ddp telefax, 28 February 1975.
dozens of flats and youth clubs (Kalmar 1975). In fact this operation was only a small foretaste of the uncompromising course that the police and government would embark on in the years to come. Matthias Dahlke rightly describes the abduction of Peter Lorenz as ‘paving the way for the turning point of a new stance on terrorism’ (Dahlke 2007: 673). The first occasion on which the government demonstrated its new course came soon. On 24 April, members of the RAF stormed the German embassy and took several hostages to enforce the release of the detained leaders of the group. This time, the West German government took an uncompromising stance, and it maintained this position during future hostage-takings.

After miscarried attacks such as the bombing at the British Yacht Club in 1972 and the killing of Günter von Drenkmann in 1974, the kidnapping of Peter Lorenz enhanced the popularity of the MJ2 on the radical Left. Soon after the abduction, a flyer with a ‘Lorenz song’ circulated in leftist circles in West Berlin that made a joke of the kidnapping. In the last stanza, the anonymous author claimed: ‘We can learn from you [i.e. the MJ2] | How one can fight and live | Only with violence and arms | Can fascism be swept away’ (Der Blues gesammelte Texte der Bewegung 2. Juni).

The successful liberation of detained comrades and the positive response in the radical Left boosted the confidence of the actors involved (see, e.g. Fritzsch and Reinders 1995: 49), and the group gained several new members (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 56). Harsh criticism, however,

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228 ‘Wegbereiter zum Wendepunkt einer neuen Haltung zum Terrorismus’
229 ‘Von euch können wir lernen | Wie man kämpft und wie man lebt | Nur durch Gewalt und Waffen | Wird der Faschismus weggefegt’
came from the RAF. In a prison note, Ulrike Meinhof complained that the MJ2’s attacks were too low level. While she defended the failed siege of the German embassy in Stockholm by the second generation of the RAF as an attempt to attack West German Imperialism, she dismissed the kidnapping as an insignificant attack against ‘a provincial politician’ [Provinzpolitiker].

3.6.4 Discussion: Doing and Undoing Gender Underground

Like the RAF, the MJ2 had an ambivalent relationship to the prevailing gender regime. Following Sylvia Walby and other feminist scholars, I use the term ‘gender regime’ here to refer to dynamic patterns of formal and informal institutions, connections and practices that define gender relations within complex social systems (see, e.g. Walby 2004, McRobbie 2009). Lorenz’ kidnappers ideologically opposed existing gender norms, and tried to put their politics into practice by consciously avoiding a gendered division of labour in their hideout in Berlin Kreuzberg. Both Lorenz’s testimony and autobiographical accounts by former group members indicate that tasks such as the preparation of the communiqué, cooking or the guarding of the hostage were done jointly or rotated among the kidnappers.

In public settings, however, the members of the MJ2 were careful not to raise suspicion. As a result, they found themselves forced to follow gender norms and social conventions that they ideologically opposed. The group’s effective recourse to femininity as camouflage during the

230 BAK, Me, U/008, 003, p. 6.
kidnapping of Peter Lorenz and other attacks indicates that the group made a virtue of necessity when it came to the prevailing gender norms. With Gabriele Rollnik, the group chose a female group member to run the shop with second hand clothing in the flat above their secret hideout. With respect to the role that she played in the attack, Rollnik stated years later: ‘I was simply a normal young woman’ (Rollnik and Dubbe 2004: 42). Another woman in the group made effective use of the stereotype of the bad woman driver, who then became a shocked and helpless victim, soothing Werner Sowa’s suspicions as the attack got underway.

The discussion in Chapter 2 has shown that the use of femininity as camouflage implies a double move in which perpetrators of political violence draw on and break with conventional gender norms. Whether a respective audience considered such gender performances ‘authentic’ or convincing, however, was not entirely up to the actors who performed them. The gendered performances of Lorenz’s kidnappers show that the possibilities and limits of tactical recourses to femininity depend largely on the material, social and symbolic context within which they occur. In Undoing Gender, Judith Butler rightly emphasises that one ‘does not “do” one’s gender alone’, but ‘with or for another, even if this other is only imaginary’ (Butler 2004: 1). In Chapter 1, I introduced Butler’s definition of gender as ‘a kind of doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one’s knowing and without one’s willing’ (ibid.). Since ‘the terms that make up one’s own gender are, from the start, outside oneself, beyond oneself in a sociality’ (ibid.), members of the MJ2 could choose to act according to or against the existing gender norms, but they could not

231 ‘Ich war einfach eine normale junge Frau’
determine how their acts were received. Moreover, whether on the streets of Berlin or in the ‘people’s prison’, the MJ2 did not act outside of the existing gender regime.

Thus, although Inge Viett felt completely detached from the ‘ugly world’ and its social norms while among her comrades, a short scene illustrates how she could not in fact escape these norms even within the ‘people’s prison’ they had built. By fixing Lorenz’s trousers, she performed an act that both the hostage and the male guard considered expressive and constitutive of femininity in the conventional sense. Even if she did not identify with this role, Viett delivered a result that made Lorenz’s think of her as a ‘good housewife’. Although Viett explicitly rejected femininity in the conventional sense, she performed femininity – willingly when using it as camouflage, and reluctantly when carrying out a task that men in the Volksgefangnis were not able or willing to perform.

In her lucid analysis of the role of difference in feminist thinking in *Nomadic Subjects*, Rosi Braidotti distinguishes between three coexisting and intersecting layers of difference (for a detailed description, see the discussion on sexual difference in Chapter 1). Leaving aside for a moment the specific political context of her project of feminist nomadism, Braidotti’s working scheme can help us to develop a better understanding of the interactions between Peter Lorenz and his kidnappers. According to Braidotti, the starting points for the project of sexual difference are a ‘critique of universalism as being male-identified and of masculinity as projecting itself as a pseudo-universal’ and ‘the will to assert the specificity of the lived, female body experience’ (Braidotti 2011: 152).
Peter Lorenz’s testimony indicates that differences between male and female kidnappers were among the first and most apparent differences that he noticed. The hostage had the impression that he dealt mostly with three group members. Despite the extensive measures which the kidnappers took to minimise visible differences in their appearance and behaviour, Lorenz claimed that he was soon able to distinguish between male and female group members and to identify peculiar features of individual kidnappers.232 Apart from their voices, he learnt to distinguish between male and female group members by means of their body height. According to Lorenz, men were generally taller than women, and they had deeper voices.233

Soon, the hostage became aware of further differences that were not apparent at first glance. In this stage, he began to notice differences among the women. This analytical process corresponds to the second level of difference in Braidotti’s scheme that emphasises that ‘a multiplicity of differences’ among women including class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, etc. (ibid.: 154). Born in 1944 and 1950, Inge Viett and Gabriele Rollnik were part of a generation of Germans who did not have personal memories of WWII. Both had grown up in the Western part of the divided country, but came from different areas and had different social backgrounds. According to the hostage, neither of the two women sounded like someone who had grown up in Berlin, and one seemed to have a Northern German accent. Lorenz reported to the police that both women had hands that showed signs of manual work – a

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233 Ibid., p. 17.
characteristic that distinguished them in Lorenz’s eyes from women with an upper class background.

At first, the hostage noticed only one woman among the kidnappers, but he soon found that there were at least two. In his interview with the police, he distinguished one woman, whom one of the kidnappers called ‘Genossin Ärztin’ [comrade doctor], and a second woman who seemed to be slightly shorter and very practically-minded. According to Lorenz, one of the two women was particularly friendly to him. While he identified a number of differences between the women involved in his kidnapping, he was not able to give a coherent description of individuals. His testimony indicates that he confounded one woman with the other on numerous occasions.

The hostage desperately tried to make sense of the interactions with his kidnappers and to identify group members who were well disposed towards him. In his attempt to identify stable reference points, Lorenz was (perhaps quite understandably) unable to recognise that every woman is, in Braidotti’s words, ‘a multiplicity in herself: split, fractured’ (ibid.: 157). The ‘good housewife’, for example, might well have been the same woman as his aggressive interrogator. Moreover, his explanation for Viett’s smile after he had complimented her on her sewing skills illustrates that his interpretations of interactions with his captors stood, at least sometimes, in stark contrast to their own remembered impressions.

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In her autobiography, Inge Viett elaborates on a range of experiences and differences that correspond to the second level of Braidotti’s scheme. In her book, Viett argues that she felt and feels different from most women in Germany: she is a lesbian, she has never wanted to have a conventional lifestyle, and she opposes the existing political order. To achieve her political objectives and to live the life she wanted to live, Inge Viett was prepared to fight, to take serious risks, and, indeed, to kill. Rather than providing a self-critical account of internal struggles, contradictions and developments, Viett unconditionally defends to this day the position that she and other women in the MJ2 and in the RAF held in the 1970s. As highlighted in the section on ideology, this position emphasises equality between male and female comrades but denies ‘the specificity of the lived, female experience’ (Braidotti 2011: 152), which constitutes a starting point of the political project of feminist nomadism.

While Viett’s position could be understood as a form of equality feminism, her approach is incompatible with Braidotti’s politics of sexual difference. According to Braidotti, sexual difference as a nomadic strategy implies ‘the extreme affirmation of sexed identity as a way of reversing the attributes of differences in a hierarchical mode’ (ibid.: 161). Rather than trying to break with the dominant gender norms by allowing or encouraging women to do everything that men do, as the RAF and the MJ2 did, Braidotti and other advocates of sexual difference argue for a

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235 Viett was involved in the deadly bombing at a British Yacht Club in Berlin in 1972. She was associated with the killings of the former MJ2 member Ulrich Schmücker in 1974 and of Günter von Drenkmann in 1975. In 1981, she shot a police officer in Paris, who survived but has been paralyzed since the attack.
process of ‘working through the old system, through a strategy of “mimetic repetition”’ (ibid.: 145). On a superficial level, this strategy may appear similar to the use of femininity as camouflage by women in the MJ2 and RAF. However, the political contexts that give significance to these ostensibly similar mimetic performances are very different. Within a feminist context, mimetic appropriations of femininity are carried out to subvert the existing gender regime, while the use of femininity as camouflage by the RAF and MJ2 was a tactic that served other political goals. In view of these findings, it is not surprising that women in the RC, and not in the RAF or MJ2, carried out the first major attacks with a distinctively feminist agenda in West Germany.
4. The Revolutionary Cells

4.1 Introduction

On 21 September 2012, the trial of the 79-year-old Sonja Suder and her 71-year-old partner Christian Gauger began in Frankfurt. The trial against the couple constitutes one of several recent attempts by German state authorities to prosecute alleged members of the RC decades after their supposed crimes. Gauger and Suder had been living in France for more than 20 years when they were arrested and extradited to Germany in September 2011. The Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office spared no effort or expense to bring the two pensioners before a German court. According to the charges, both were members of the RC in the 1970s and were involved in the planning and execution of several of the group’s attacks.

Like the judgements against the former group members Rudolf Schindler, Sabine Eckle and others in 2004, and against Thomas Kram in 2009, the charges against Suder and Gauger are largely based on the contested claims of a former comrade who reduced his own sentence by cooperating with the police. The weak evidence against Suder and Gauger shows that after all these years, state and police authorities still know very little about the structure and activities of the RC in the 1970s. But in fact this ignorance is not only confined to the state: the lack of serious discussion and analysis of the group and its activities, in stark contrast to the RAF, also means that its history is being lost to scholars and to new generations of activists. This chapter seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the history of the RC by discussing its origins in Frankfurt, as well as its structure, ideology and activities. Of particular
interest for this discussion is an aspect that the few existing publications have gravely neglected: the history of feminism in the RC.

On 4 March 1975, a hitherto unknown group, which introduced itself as ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ (WoRC), planted a bomb at the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe. In their claim of responsibility, the women declared that they had attacked the highest German court to protest against its decision to uphold the abortion ban in West Germany. The bombing at the Federal Court of Justice marked the beginning of a 20-year long history of manifestations of political violence with an explicitly feminist agenda.

In contrast to female members of the RAF and other militant leftist groups in West Germany, at least some of the women in the RC took up women’s issues and identified as feminists. But does that make them part of the New Women’s Movement? Ilse Lenz points out that ‘given the diversified, decentralised nature of this social movement [i.e. the New Women’s Movement] and the absence of general classification criteria, it seems hardly possible to provide a definitive answer to this question’ (Lenz 2010: 269). While a number of underground zines and several books (see, e.g. Geronimo 1990, Dark Star 2003, Antliff 2004) discuss feminist militancy in Germany from an anarchist or anarcha-feminist perspective, scholarly publications on political violence and on the women’s movement in West Germany have long neglected this topic. Lenz’ book Die Neue Frauenbewegung in Deutschland [The New Women’s Movement in Germany] from 2010 constitutes one of the first

\[^{236}^{236}\text{"Eine eindeutige Antwort auf diese Frage scheint kaum möglich bei einer so breit gefächerten dezentrierten sozialen Bewegung, die keine organisationalen Zuordnungskriterien anerkannte"}^{236}\]
tentative attempts to discuss militant protest with a feminist background in this context. There can be little doubt that feminists constituted a minority among women in the militant Left in West Germany and that militant women constituted a minority in the New Women’s Movement. But a closer look at this minor phenomenon offers valuable insights for research on the history of the New Women’s Movement and of political violence in West Germany.

The very existence of feminist militancy in the RC refutes the assumptions that feminists are per se non-violent and that militant protest cannot be feminist. In any case, there is no denying that the politics of the New Women’s Movement had a profound impact on the ideology and approach of the RC; and inspired the formation of an autonomous women’s guerrilla within the militant network. This chapter offers one of the first detailed analyses of the subcultural background, ideology and activities of the RC, and the first scholarly attempt to discuss feminism in the group.

4.2 Existing Literature and Data Collection

If publications on political violence in Germany refer to the RC at all, they usually mention it in passing (see, e.g. Diewald-Kerkmann 2009: 19, Grisard 2011: 222) or deal with it in a few pages (see, e.g. Langguth 1983, Backes and Jesse 1990, Rabert 1995, Fetscher 1981, Kahl 1989). To date, there are no more than two scholarly articles (Kraushaar 2006c, Wörle 2008) and one book length study (Siemens 2006) that offer detailed discussions of the RC. Johannes Wörle’s analysis of the ideology and
theory of the RC draws primarily on claims of responsibility and other
group statements. Occasionally, he refers to newspaper articles and
previous research. Wolfgang Kraushaar’s essay focuses on a brief but
significant episode in the history of the RC: the formation of the first cell
in Frankfurt. Apart from internal sources, Kraushaar’s discussion is based
on material that he collected in local archives and other collections.

Anne Maria Siemens’ PhD thesis (2007) traces the life journeys of
Joschka Fischer, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Hans Joachim Klein and Johannes
Weinrich, four key actors in the radical Left in Frankfurt am Main. While
all were active in the same circles in the late 1960s and early 1970s,
Fischer and Cohn-Bendit became well-known politicians, while Klein and
Weinrich joined the Revolutionary Cells.

To contribute to a better understanding of their politicisation and
different ‘careers’, Siemens conducted extensive interviews with
contemporary witnesses and several former RC members. While her data
and analysis are truly original, it is regrettable that Siemens focuses
exclusively on male actors, and that her analysis pays little attention to
gender. Drawing on insights from previous research and a range of new
sources, this chapter seeks to offer a gender-sensitive discussion of the RC
and to shed more light on the role of women in the group.

To this day, the RC presents great challenges to researchers.
Intelligence gathered by police and legal authorities is for the most part
inaccessible to scholars. Most members of the RC are not known by name
and have never been listed on public wanted lists. Press coverage is also
only of limited use for a discussion of the RC. With some exceptions (e.g.,
in the aftermath of particularly spectacular attacks or, more recently,
during one of the few trials), the group did not make it into the headlines of the popular media.

Given the lack of literature and news coverage on the RC, group statements, autobiographies and other internal accounts constitute an indispensable source for research on the group. In 2001, former members of the RC claimed: ‘To this day, there is no authentic retrospective on the early years of the RC. Not even in the individual form of an autobiography. Those who would have something to say about the issue are either dead or remain silent’

In 2007, Magdalena Kopp published her autobiography Die Terrorjahre [The Years of Terror]. Born in South Germany in 1948, Kopp moved to Frankfurt in the 1960s, where she worked as a photographer and became acquainted with several founding members of the RC (Kopp 2007: 47 ff). Kopp played only a minor role in the RC, and her book focuses almost exclusively on the activities of Ilich Ramírez Sanchez, alias ‘Carlos the jackal’, and members of the so-called ‘internationalist’ wing of the RC. As this chapter illustrates, this group constituted only a small part of the militant leftist network and operated largely autonomously. Despite

237 ‘Bis heute gibt es keinen authentischen Rückblick auf die frühen Jahre der RZ. Selbst nicht in der individualisierten Form einer Autobiografie. Diejenigen, die etwas dazu sagen könnten, sind entweder tot oder schweigen’
these limitations, Kopp’s autobiography is of great interest for my discussion, because it constitutes the only detailed account by a woman and mother who was part of the RC.

To date, the only other autobiography by a former member of the RC is Hans-Joachim Klein’s *Rückkehr in die Menschlichkeit [Return to Humanity]*, which was first published in 1979. Like Kopp, Klein was a member of the internationalist wing of the group, but in 1977 he distanced himself publicly from the RC. While Klein’s book includes a detailed description of the subcultural scene in which the RC emerged, his testimony lacks credibility. Klein, who had been actively involved in the OPEC raid in Vienna in 1975, one of the most brutal attacks in the history of the RC, reduced his sentence considerably by volunteering as a principal witness in trials against some of his former comrades. According to both the people he incriminated and independent observers of the trials, Klein’s statements were vague and contradictory (see, e.g. Friedrichsen 2000, 2012, Frank 2012). Klein criticised his former comrades heavily and claimed that they wanted to kill him (Klein 1977). The remaining group countered his allegations in a number of open letters, in which they attacked him as traitor and liar (*Die Früchte des Zorns* 1993: 145ff).

In 1993, the ID archive\textsuperscript{238} compiled an anthology in two volumes, which included a documentation of the heated debate between Klein and the RC and numerous other statements by members of the militant

\textsuperscript{238} ID stands for Informationsdienst zur Verbreitung unterbliebener Nachrichten [Information Service for the Dissemination of Untold News]. From 1973 until 1981, this alternative press agency released a weekly newsletter to provide a platform for ‘voices from below. In 1988, the ID-press archive was integrated into the collections of the International Archive of Social History in Amsterdam’ (source: http://www.IISH.nl/collections/id/geschichte.php).
The sheer magnitude of the 800-page publication indicates that, in contrast to the MJ2, the members of the RC were zealous to disseminate their ideas. In order to explain and to spread its activities, the group published claims of responsibility for more than 100 attacks and published a number of texts in leftist underground magazines. Between 1975 and 1986, the group also released a magazine with the telling title *Revolutionärer Zorn* [*Revolutionary Rage*] at irregular intervals. The RC used *Revolutionary Rage* as a platform to publicise its activities, discuss theoretical questions, and comment on current affairs. Occasionally, the magazine included anonymous interviews with group members or concrete instructions for those who wanted to follow in the footsteps of the RC.

In addition to the sources that have been analysed in previous studies, I have collected a substantial amount of new data. This material includes internal and external sources from the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam (IISH), the Federal Archives in Koblenz (BAK), the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (HIS) and the Frauenmediaturm in Cologne (FMT). It also includes data that I collected during interviews with two former members of the RC, three former members of the RZ and with former members of the radical Left in Frankfurt. To protect the safety and privacy of my interviewees, I use only a part of the gathered information and I have anonymised some statements.

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Rather than using the two-volume print version *Die Früchte des Zorns: Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der Revolutionären Zellen und der Roten Zora*, this chapter draws on an electronic version of the publication that circulates on the internet.
4.3 History

4.3.1 The Formation of the First Revolutionary Cell

Like the RAF and the MJ2, the RC emerged in the context of a fragmentation and polarisation of the student and protest movement in West Germany (Wörle 2008: 257). Most of the men and women who founded the RC were former or actual university students, and several group members had completed academic degrees (Bundesminister des Innern 1989: 77). Similar to the first generation of the RAF, many founding members of the RC had played an active role in the student and protest movement in the late 1960s and had been involved in a range of leftist groups and local initiatives. An important difference to the RAF and MJ2 is that the RC emerged in Frankfurt, not in Berlin.

Like West Berlin, Frankfurt was a university city with a vibrant student culture and became a hotbed of protests in the 1960s. The social environment of the student and protest movement in Frankfurt, however, differed considerably from that in Berlin. Due to its peculiar geo-political position, West Berlin was politically and economically isolated. Frankfurt, by contrast, was the financial capital of the FRG, a key logistical hub for rail and air traffic (both civil and military air transport), and a centre of industrial activity. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the city became one of the most important German destinations for guest labourers from Italy, Greece, Spain, Yugoslavia, and Turkey (Lüken-Klaßen 2007: 9). As part of the radical Left in Frankfurt, the founding members of the RC tried to relate to and work with some of the migrant communities, factory workers and other local groups in the city.
Before joining the armed struggle, members of the first Revolutionary Cell played an active role in political groups and local initiatives in Frankfurt. These include the youth organisation ‘Red Panthers’ [Rote Panther], the ‘Black Panther Solidarity Committee’ [Black-Panther-Solidaritätskomitee], the ‘New Left Federation’ [Föderation Neue Linke], and the ‘Red Gallus’ neighbourhood group [Stadtteilgruppe Roter Gallus] (Kraushaar 2006c: 588).

As the names indicate, the formation of the Red Panthers and the Black Panther Solidarity Committee took inspiration from the African-American Civil Rights Movement and the revolutionary Marxist Black Panther Party in the US. Founded in 1969, the Black Panther Solidarity Committee sought to organise educational work about and active support for the Black Panthers in Germany (Klimke 2006: 570). According to the historian Martin Klimke, an identification with the countercultural style, readiness to use violence, and radical anti-imperialist stance of the Black Panthers played a decisive role in the radicalisation of the founding members of the RC and of other militant leftist groups in West Germany (ibid.: 572).

‘Red Gallus’ set itself the objective of supporting and mobilising people in Gallus, which was one of the most deprived parts of Frankfurt. Due to a relatively high concentration of socially and economically disadvantaged population groups such as foreigners, welfare recipients and unemployed persons, the quarter was stigmatised as a ‘problem

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The facts that the first RAF statement featured the logo of the Black Panther Party and that the extensive library of the detained founding members in Stuttgart Stammheim included books by Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton with handwritten comments indicate that the Black Panthers also played an important role for the the RAF.
neighbourhood’ (Lüken-Klaßen 2007: 23). In one of their pamphlets, Red Gallus described its membership as a mix of ‘high school students, apprentices, young workers, and students from the SDS’\(^{241}\). At least five future members of the RC – Sabine Eckle, Hans-Joachim Klein, Gerd Albartus, Wilfried ‘Boni[fatius]’ Böse and Johannes Weinrich – were part of the ‘Red Gallus’ group. A driving force behind Red Gallus and several other of the groups mentioned above was Karl Dietrich or ‘KD’ Wolff, a leading activist in the student and protest movement. Although Wolff was never part of the RC, he worked closely with several founding members.

In 1970, KD Wolff, ‘Boni’ Böse and Johannes Weinrich co-founded the radical publishing house ‘Red Star’ [Roter Stern] in Frankfurt. Red Star publications from the early 1970s included, amongst a range of magazines and books, feminist texts such as Clara Zetkin’s *Zur Geschichte der proletarischen Frauenbewegung Deutschlands* [On the History of the Proletarian Women’s Movement in Germany], a translation of Pamela Allen’s *Free Space: A Perspective on the Small Group in Women’s Liberation*, and the first edition of the radical feminist *Frauenjahrbuch* [Women’s Year book].

Most books and magazines that the Red Star published in the early 1970s, however, broached the issue of revolutionary struggle and armed rebellion. Examples include the writings of the North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung in several volumes; books by Eldridge Cleaver, Huey Newton and other foundational texts of the Black Panther Party, as well as the periodicals *Erziehung und Klassenkampf* [*Education and Class Struggle*]

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In 1973, Wolff, Weinrich and Böse bought a house in Frankfurt, which became an office for Red Star and a home for Böse and Wolff. Soon, two other future members of the RC, Magdalena Kopp and Brigitte Kuhlmann, moved into the four-storied building. Evidence suggests that at the time Böse and Wolff maintained close relations with leading members of the RAF and that Böse provided the group with weapons on several occasions (Kaushaar 2006: 592-593). The lively exchange between staff of Red Star and the RAF, as well as the growing support for the armed struggle in the leftist book scene, did not escape the attention of the police: in August 1976, police officers raided political bookstores all over the country. While liberal journalists criticised the raid as part of a ‘witch hunt’ against the entire Left in West Germany, state authorities declared it a success: Police officers confiscated thousands of publications that they deemed ‘violence glorifying’ and ‘anti-constitutional’, and arrested the owner of one book store. Among the confiscated texts were also several editions of the RC magazine Revolutionary Rage (‘Sechs Stück Zorn’ 1976).
While a number of texts on the publication list of Red Star clearly influenced the ideology of the RC, it would be a gross simplification to depict the radicalisation of Böse, Weinrich, Kuhlmann and other founding members of the RC as a direct progression from books to bombs. Donatella Della Porta rightly emphasises that political violence in West Germany ‘did not derive directly from the presence of ideologies that justified violence’ (Della Porta 1995: 196). Many, if not all, founding members of the Revolutionary Cells were involved in selling or publishing books (Kraushaar 2006c: 590). But not everyone involved with Red Star joined the RC.

That said, Red Star clearly acted as a social hub and meeting point for members of the militant Left in West Germany. Gerd Schnepel was running a leftist bookstore and publishing house in Southern Germany when he made the acquaintance of the founding members of the RC. According to Schnepel, he had reached a point where he felt that political literature and legal forms of protest alone would not lead to the fundamental political changes that he wanted to see, and in Kuhlmann and Böse, he found comrades who shared this view.

Previous scholarship suggests that Böse was the driving force behind the formation of the Revolutionary Cells (see, e.g. Kraushaar 2006: 593, Wörle 2008: 257). It also seems that Weinrich and Kuhlmann played important roles. According to several authors, Weinrich was a leading member of the ‘internationalist’ wing of the group (see, e.g. Siemens 2006, Schröm 2004, Kopp 2007). Sometimes, he is referred to

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242 Böse, Weinrich, Kopp and Kuhlmann all worked for the Red Star; Schnepel and Kram were running their own bookshops before joining the RC.
243 Source: Schnepel in an e-mail to the author on 26 July 2011.
as the ‘right hand’ of Ilich Ramírez Sanchez – better known as ‘Carlos the Jackal’ (Freispruch für Top-Terrorist Weinrich’ 2004). Sanchez cooperated with the RC on several occasions, but was not a member of the network. He had his own group, which made headlines with a number of spectacular and brutal attacks (e.g., the attack on an OPEC-meeting in Vienna in 1975). After years of hiding in the Middle East, Weinrich and Sanchez were arrested in the mid-1990s and sentenced to life imprisonment (‘Carlos the Jackal to appeal against life sentence’ 1997).

Böse and Kuhlmann are no longer able to provide an account of their participation in the armed struggle, having been killed by Israeli forces in 1976 after they and several Palestinian fighters hijacked an airplane with 248 passengers on route from Paris to Tel Aviv. According to Wolfgang Kraushaar, Böse remains ‘a known unknown in the history of West German terrorism’ (Kraushaar 2006: 592ff). In an attempt to illuminate Böse’s role in the formation of the RC, Kraushaar draws on accounts of former comrades and other contemporary witnesses. These informants depict the editor and sociology student as a bustling organisational talent and key actor in the radical leftist scene – a description that resonates with the testimonies of former members of the RC and the RAF (see, e.g. Klein 1979b, Schiller 2001).

While Kraushaar provides valuable insight into Böse’s biography, he shows little interest in Kuhlmann’s life and personality. In line with previous authors, he exclusively refers to the pedagogy student from Hannover as Böse’s girlfriend (Kraushaar 2006: 589-590). One of the few accounts to throw a different light on Kuhlmann is Kopp’s autobiography.

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244 ‘bekanntesten Unbekannten in der Geschichte des bundesdeutschen Terrorismus’
According to Kopp, the two women became friends when they were living together in Frankfurt in 1973. At the time, Kopp’s partner worked full-time for the ‘Red Star’, and she worked as a freelance photographer whilst looking after their little daughter. Kuhlmann was a trainee teacher who worked with handicapped children in a local Waldorf school. Like Böse, Kuhlmann moved within radical leftist circles and knew leading members of the RAF (Kopp 2007: 61).

Kopp’s account and other personal testimonies suggest that, unlike other founding members of the RC, Kuhlmann took a distinctively feminist stance in personal and political matters. According to Kopp, Kuhlmann advised her to swap roles with her partner, after Kopp had complained that he neglected her and their daughter. Kopp’s memories of Kuhlmann resonate with the descriptions that former acquaintances and friends provided to me in interviews. According to a former friend, Kuhlmann was a feminist who enjoyed life but who had a strong sense of social and pedagogical responsibility.\textsuperscript{245} Her comrade and former partner Gerd Schnepel remembers Brigitte Kuhlmann as ‘women’s lib, anti-authoritarian, resolute and honest’.\textsuperscript{246} These positive descriptions contrast sharply with the accounts of hostages in the airplane that Kuhlmann hijacked with Böse and Palestinian fighters. According to a former hostage, she acted ‘like a Nazi’ (Melman 2011). As we shall see, the hijacking of the Israeli airplane and other international alliances became the subject of controversial debates in the RC that ultimately led to a breakdown into ‘international’ and ‘national’ wings.

\textsuperscript{245} Source: Female informant in an e-mail to the author on 3 July 2012.
\textsuperscript{246} Source: Schnepel in an e-mail to the author on 26 July 2011.
4.3.2 From One to Many Revolutionary Cells

The subheading on the front cover of the first issues of the RC zine *Revolutionary Rage* read ‘journal of the Revolutionary Cell’. Soon, the group made a small but significant change to that line. Starting from 1976, the title read ‘journal of the Revolutionary Cells’. Between 1973 and 1976, the RC committed dozens of attacks with substantial property damage, and also grew considerably. While it is difficult to estimate how many cells existed in 1976, the geographic range of attacks in this period indicates that the group operated not only in Frankfurt and its surroundings but also in the Ruhr area, in South Germany and in West Berlin.

Until 1978, the police knew very little about the group and its members. This changed with the extensive testimony of Hermann Feiling (Rabert 1995: 200). Prior to a fatal accident in June 1978, Feiling had been part of a Revolutionary Cell in Heidelberg.²⁴⁷ Still in hospital, he admitted that he was a member of one of at least eleven cells in West Germany. Apparently, his cell had five members and included at least two women (Kraushaar 2006: 598). According to Feiling, four of these groups were based in Frankfurt and surroundings, others in Berlin, the Ruhr-area, and in the south of Germany (Wörle 2008: 261). On average, the cells had three to five members (Kahl 1989: 109). Each group acted

²⁴⁷ During preparations for an attack on the Argentinean consulate in Heidelberg on 23 June 1978, a self-made bomb exploded on Hermann Feiling’s lap and almost killed him. Shortly after the accident, police officers interrogated Feiling in hospital. Since he was in extreme pain and under strong medication and had no access to a lawyer in giving testimony, Feiling renounced his statements later.
autonomously and most members knew little about the activities of other groups. In order to keep the risk for the actors involved as small as possible, no RC member used their real name, and only one person in each cell communicated with other groups. Whilst operating as a decentralised network, the organisation coordinated in terms of campaign strategy and ideology by holding regular delegate meetings, and also through discussion in *Revolutionary Rage*.

It was more the exception than the rule that the RC recruited individual members for already existing groups. Rather, the RC used the *Revolutionary Rage* and claims of responsibility to promote its armed struggle and to encourage others to form their own revolutionary cells. Previous findings indicate that the members of individual cells knew each other well and that the cohesion and trust within local groups was very high. Often, the members of local groups were friends or lovers and lived or worked together. The romantic relationships between Rudolf Schindler and Sabine Eckle, Sonja Suder and Christian Gauger, Johannes Weinrich and Magdalena Kopp, Wilfried Böse and Brigitte Kuhlmann are examples of the close ties that existed among former group members of the RC in the early 1970s.

It seems that the extent to which cells divided tasks according to traditional gender norms depended largely on the personal beliefs of and relationships among members of particular sub-groups. Magdalena Kopp’s testimony indicates that as a member of Carlos’ group, she bore the sole responsibility for family and household, while he and other men planned and committed armed attacks. Evidence suggests that the gendered division of labour in the international wing of the RC stood in
sharp contrast to the distribution of tasks in other cells. According to Schnepel, the daily life of members of the RC resembled that in most housing collectives and in leftist couples. ‘We shared cooking, washing up, etc. with occasional relapses into “typical” [i.e. gender-specific] behaviour’\textsuperscript{248}.

There are no statistics about female participation in the RC, but the data collected for this thesis suggests that the percentage of women in the group was as high as the proportion of women in the RAF and MJ2, if not higher. It also indicates that women played a variety of roles in the network. The activities of female group members in the first Revolutionary Cell in Frankfurt ranged from messenger services (e.g. in the case of Magdalena Kopp alias ‘Vera’, or Christa Margot Fröhlich alias ‘Heidi’) to active involvement in violent attacks (e.g. in the case of Brigitte Kuhlmann alias ‘Halimeh’\textsuperscript{249}).

Evidence suggests that not only Böse but also Kuhlmann played a leading role in the formation of the RC. The accounts of several contemporary witnesses suggest that ‘Boni and Brigitte’ acted as a well-rehearsed team (see, e.g. Kopp 2007, Schiller 2001). In an e-mail interview, former RC member Gerd Schnepel acknowledged Kuhlmann’s vital role in the formation of the RC. Moreover, he confirmed that the anonymous group member who gave the only RC interview in the

\textsuperscript{248} ‘Unser Alltag war ganz normal wie in WG üblich oder bei linken Paaren. Man teilte sich Kochen, Abwasch usw. mit den gelegentlichen Rückfällen in ‘typisches’ Verhalten’ (source: E-Mail to the author on 12 November 2012).

\textsuperscript{249} Halimeh was one of several pseudonyms Kuhlmann used during her time in the RC. Allegedly, Palestinian fighters came up with the name to honour Kuhlmann. Some authors translate ‘Halimeh’ as ‘gentle’ (Klein 1979: 89), others as ‘beautiful female camel’ (Vowinckel 2004).
formative years of the group was Kuhlmann. Even if there were no formal leaders or spokespersons in the RC, Kuhlmann doubtless had a lot to say.

The RC saw going underground as a last resort (Kahl 1989: 107). In a statement from 1978, the group claimed: ‘Organising and preparing for a life in the underground does not mean that all open and legal activities should be abandoned’ (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 153). Members of the RC tried to combine legal and illegal activities and to maintain their involvement in local initiatives and groups after joining the armed struggle. Rather than expecting members to go underground, the RC encouraged them to maintain their legal lives. This approach proved successful: more than a few members of the RC led a double life for years without arousing suspicion.

As a result of this tactic, the RC were sometimes referred to as ‘Feierabendterroristen’ [‘after-work’-terrorists] (see, e.g. ‘Voll unter Fittichen’ 1980: 137). This also had implications for their dress and appearance. As discussed in previous chapters, RAF and MJ2 members, particularly those who went underground, often adopted a ‘bourgeois’ appearance in an effort to pass as ‘normal’ citizens. RC members, in contrast, tended to maintain the looks and lifestyles typical of the subcultures and social movements in which they had participated before they joined the armed struggle, and in which they continued to participate.

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250 Schnepel told me that he conducted the interview with Kuhlmann in the Swiss Alps a few months before publishing it in the book Holger, der Kampf geht weiter [Holger, the Struggle] in 1975 (Schnepel in an e-mail to the author, 28 July 2011).
251 ‘Die Organisierung und Vorbereitung der Illegalität bedeutet nicht, auf legale, offene Arbeit zu verzichten’
4.3.3 The Separation from the ‘International’ Cell

Both in Germany and abroad, the RC are best known for two attacks by a rather small part of the group: the raid during the OPEC-conference in Vienna in 1975 and the Entebbe hijacking in 1976. Hans-Joachim Klein was one of two Germans who participated in the OPEC raid on 21 December 1975. Together with three Palestinian fighters, and Ilich Ramírez Sanchez, who had allegedly masterminded the attack, the two Germans stormed the OPEC-building in Vienna. Once inside they took 62 hostages and killed three people. The captors urged the participants in the conference to refuse Israel’s right to exist and to support the Palestinian resistance (Sabitzer 2006).

Like the OPEC raid, the abduction of the EL AL flight to Tel Aviv in 1976 was a joint operation between the RC and the PFLP that ended tragically. Israeli troops stormed the abducted airplane in Entebbe, Uganda, and liberated most hostages. Yet more than 20 Ugandan soldiers, all seven hijackers (among them Böse and Kuhlmann), as well as one Israeli soldier and four hostages were killed in the course of the military intervention, known as ‘Operation Thunderbolt’ (Vowinckel 2004).

Reports that the German hijackers had divided the Entebbe hostages into Jews and non-Jews sparked a public outcry. According to Kraushaar and other critics, Böse and Kuhlmann replicated the behaviour of ‘NS-Schergen’ [Nazi henchmen] (Kraushaar 2006c: 599). Beyond doubt, the hijacking must have been a traumatic experience for all

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The other German who was actively involved in the attack was the MJ2 member Gabriele Kröcher-Tiedemann.
hostages and a particularly appalling event for the Holocaust survivors among them. Nevertheless, it is a former hostage who has challenged the widely-held view that the hijackers singled out Jewish passengers. According to former hostage Ilan Hartuv, there ‘was no selection applied to Jews: Entebbe was not Auschwitz’ (Melman 2011). What cannot be doubted is that the hijackers separated Israeli citizens from other passengers.

To this day, a number of their former group members claim that Kuhlmann’s and Böse’s role in the hijacking was misunderstood and misrepresented. They insist that the German hijackers were ‘anti-fascists’ (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 16), and that the RC were ‘anti-imperialist’ and ‘anti-Zionist’ but not ‘anti-Semitic’ (Schne pel 2000). However, in his essay ‘Volksklasse nkampf’ – Die antizionistische Rezeption [The People’s Struggle – The Anti-Zionist Reception], Volker Weiss argues that the political and historical line between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism was not that clear. He reasons that ‘[i]n the shadow of the conflict between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arabic states, different issues, including anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic topoi from the Middle East Conflict, amalgamated’\(^{253}\) (Weiss 2005: 236). According to Weiss, the Revolutionary Cells and other militant leftist groups in West Germany failed to account for the ‘complex social and political fault lines’ within the state of Israel and saw the country as a ‘monolithic block’ [monolithischer Block] (ibid.: 237-238). By equating the politics of the

\(^{253}\) ‘Im Schatten des Konfliktes zwischen Israel, den Palästinensern und den arabischen Staaten wurden verschiedene Elemente verquickt, zu denen die Topoi des Antizionismus ebenso gehören wie die des Antisemitismus des Nahostkonflikts in der militanten Linken der BRD’
state of Israel with those of Nazi Germany, these groups made Israel into ‘a projection screen for the German past and international conflicts, and Zionism was constructed as the enemy of any emancipation’ (ibid.: 238).

Weiss emphasises that the RC was the only militant leftist group in West Germany that postulated a programmatic anti-Zionism – but also the only one that openly questioned this ideology at some point (ibid.: 233). In 1991, some members of the RC circulated a statement in which they admitted that the Entebbe hijacking constituted the culmination of a series of international alliances that had begun with a ‘legitimate criticism’ [legitime Kritik] of the Israeli settlement policy but led to an unacceptable ‘historical amnesia’ [historische Amnesie] (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 17). ‘Faced with the loss of their friends’, they had failed ‘to realise the political dimension of the catastrophe that Entebbe represented’, the members acknowledged 15 years after the hijacking (ibid.).

Even if the group was not necessarily aware of it at the time, Entebbe marked a watershed in the history of the RC. For most group members, the failed kidnapping would lead to a turn away from ‘anti-Zionist’ attacks, which had previously constituted a central field of action for the group (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 62). Other group members, however, reacted differently. Feeling that occasional attacks against Israeli institutions in Germany did not go far enough, they considered it

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254 ‘Das Land wurde zur Projektionsfläche für deutsche Vergangenheit und internationale Konflikte, der Zionismus zum Feind jeglicher Emanzipation stilisiert.’
255 ‘Unter dem Eindruck des Verlustes der Freunde waren wir zunächst unfähig, die politische Dimension der Katastrophe zu ermessen, die Entebbe für uns bedeutete.’
imperative that the RC did not limit its activities to Germany, and increasingly began to participate in armed conflicts around the globe.

This small group, which never formally separated from the RC, is sometimes referred to as the ‘international cell’ or ‘internationalist wing’ of the network (see, e.g. ‘Geschichten des Zorns’ 2001, Dia-Gruppe 2001, Kraushaar 2006c: 600, Wörle 2008: 261). The dramatic events in Entebbe and the death of Kuhlmann and Böse left the internationalist wing in an isolated position within the RC, as most group members refrained from committing further attacks against Israeli institutions and focused increasingly on local struggles and new social movements such as the anti-nuclear movement and the women’s movement in West Germany (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 18).

4.3.4 Feminism in the RC

The first edition of the RC-zine Revolutionary Rage illustrates that, in contrast to the RAF and the MJ2, the RC quickly espoused the cause of women’s liberation. Here, the RC declared, as mentioned previously, that supporting ‘the struggles of workers, young people and women’256, constituted a priority for them (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 62). In 1986, former member Enno Schwall explained that ‘[t]he RC tried to include a feminist dimension from the very beginning’257 (Schwall 1986). According to Schwall, feminism was not merely an additional area of politics for the

256 ‘Kämpfe von Arbeitern, Jugendlichen, Frauen’
RC; it also inspired a part of the group to form an autonomous women’s guerrilla organisation that was based on feminist principles (ibid.).

While the data collected for this thesis supports Schwall’s claim, it also indicates that the history of feminism in the RC was far more complex than his statement suggests. The group was generally open to feminist ideas, but the views of members differed considerably when it came to the question of what it meant to include ‘a feminist dimension’ in their politics. Most men in the RC were indifferent to feminist ideas or supported them largely in principle, rather than in practice. With one exception, to which we shall return later, they left it to women in the group to plan and carry out attacks with a feminist agenda.

It is important to note that not all women in the RC identified as feminists, and only a part of those who did wanted to organise in a separate group. To contribute to a better understanding of the complex role of feminism in the RC, I want to distinguish between three positions among female members of the RC. These positions coexisted in the group until 1984, when the Red Zora, which had previously formed the feminist wing of the militant network, left the RC.

A first position on feminism in the RC was that of the (female) militant. The word female is placed in brackets here because female group members with this stance understood themselves not primarily as women but as revolutionaries. In many respects, this position is comparable to the stance of many women in the RAF and MJ2. While they did not identify as feminists and did not actively participate in the Women’s Movement, female militants in the RC saw equality between men and women in the group as a matter of course. Like their male comrades,
female militants performed a range of roles in the group, and they were involved in the struggles of a range of groups (e.g. protests by migrants and workers or the anti-nuclear movement).

The *feminist militant* is a second position that existed among women in the RC. Group members with this stance engaged with feminist ideas, and they wanted to see women’s issues on the political agenda of the RC. Feminist militants were also among the women who participated in the first attack with an explicitly feminist agenda in the history of the group. To protest against the enforcement of the ban on abortions in West Germany by the Federal Court of Justice in February 1975, a group of women in the RC planted a bomb at the highest German court a few weeks after the judgement. The case study in the second part of this chapter offers a detailed discussion of this attack. The members of the RC wanted to support the struggles of women, but that was neither their only nor their main priority. The position of feminist militants in the RC reflects this view. While the struggle for women’s liberation was a genuine concern for them, it was neither their only nor their main concern. Feminist militants in the RC understood themselves neither exclusively nor primarily as feminists. Evidence suggests that some women in fact supported attacks that were at odds with their feminist principles.

RC co-founder Brigitte Kuhlmann provides a good example of this feminist militant stance. Apparently, she introduced ideas and politics of the New Women’s Movement to the group and tried to put them into practice in her personal relationships. According to Magdalena Kopp and other friends and acquaintances, Kuhlmann identified as a feminist. However, Kopp also confirmed that Kuhlmann’s highest priority – the
liberation of Ulrike Meinhof and other ‘political prisoners’ – was not related to the New Women’s Movement.²⁵⁸ To force the release of imprisoned comrades, Kuhlmann supported activities and alliances that seem difficult to reconcile with her feminist principles: for example, she was actively involved in the planning and execution of joint attacks with hierarchical, male-dominated groups, such as Carlos the Jackal’s ‘Organization of Armed Struggle’. In her eyes, ‘anti-Zionist’ and ‘anti-imperialist’ campaigns were as important if not more important than feminist campaigns.

In the eyes of militant feminists in the RC, the feminist politics of Kuhlmann and other women in the group did not go far enough. Like feminist militants, militant feminists in the RC identified with the women’s movement and its aims. They, too, were actively involved in the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice. Yet in contrast to the feminist militants who participated in the attack, they held radical feminist views. In 1999, Yvonne P. Doderer aptly characterised this branch of feminism as follows:

Radical feminism prioritises the gender issue, which means in this context the oppression of women through an appropriation of their sexuality and the exploitation of their reproductive capacities by individual men and by patriarchy. Radical feminists found that men with leftist views and their theories were not necessarily reflective and critical of these oppressive [patriarchal] structures. A central assumption in radical feminism is that all women are

²⁵⁸ Source: Interview with Magdalena Kopp on 30 October 2011.
affected by gender-based oppression and that all need to liberate themselves from dependencies on men.\textsuperscript{259} (Doderer 1999: 7)

While it is important to stress that a radical feminist stance by no means implies militant or violent forms of protest, Doderer’s definition of radical feminism highlights a number of important characteristics of militant feminism in the RC.

In line with radical feminist ideas, militant feminists in the RC considered the exploitation of women to be one of the earliest and most universal forms of oppression and a governing principle in patriarchal structures (\textit{Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 209-211). According to them, occasional campaigns on women’s issues alone could hardly challenge patriarchal structures within the group and in society at large. They argued that feminist politics had to be put into practice at all levels of the armed struggle, including personal relationships, ideology, structure, tactics and targets. Many men in the RC, however, were – at least according to their radical feminist comrades – not willing or able to question their politics or ‘patriarchal identity’ [patriarchale Identität] in such a radical way (Die Rote Zora 1993).

Partly in response to the perceived lack of support in the RC, partly because they wanted to create a group based on radical feminist principles, militant feminists in the RC formed an autonomous feminist

\textsuperscript{259} ‘Der Radikalfeminismus setzte die Geschlechterfrage an erste Stelle, womit die Unterdrückung von Frauen durch die Aneignung ihrer Sexualität durch die Ausbeutung ihrer Reproduktionskräfte durch einzelne Männer und das Patriarchat gemeint ist. Von diesen Unterdrückungsstrukturen und –mechanismen waren, so erkannten, die Radikalfeministinnen, auch die linken Männer und ihre Theorien nicht ausgenommen. [...] Zentral [...] ist weiterhin der Ausgangspunkt, dass alle Frauen von der Geschlechterfrage betroffen sind und dass sich alle aus Abhängigkeiten von Männern befreien müssen.’
cell within the militant leftist network. From 1977, this group operated under the name ‘Red Zora’ (RZ). While it seems that most founding members of the RZ had been part of the WoRC, three former group members explained to me in an interview that the membership of the RZ was not identical with that of the WoRC.\footnote{A RZ-statement from 1993 supports this claim. Here, the group mentions that it had recruited members not only in the RC but also in the women’s movement (Die Rote Zora 1993). To shed more light on the history of feminism in the RC and on the formation of the RZ, the case studies in this and the following chapter provide a detailed discussion of the activities and positions of feminist militants and militant feminists in the RC.}

\section*{4.4 Ideology}

The founding members of the RC had closely followed the activities of the RAF and the MJ2 in the early 1970s and were in contact with leading members of both groups (Kopp 2007: 62, see also: Kraushaar 2006, Wörle 2008). Like the RAF and the MJ2, the RC considered violent attacks against state authorities and institutions not only legitimate but imperative to overcome a political order that they understood as a form of illegitimate violence. In 1975, Brigitte Kuhlmann claimed:

\begin{quote}
There are two kinds of violence, two kinds of dead. On the one hand, there is the violence of those who rule, to secure power, to oppress the masses of exploited and violated people; on the other hand, there is the resistance of small parts of the population, the struggle of the masses, resistance on different levels and in
\end{quote}

\footnote{Source: Focus group with three Zoras on 17 August 2012.}
all spheres of society with all available means.261 (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 75)

In the first issues of Revolutionary Rage, the group left deliberately open what forms resistance and struggles against the existing political order in West Germany could or should take. They called for a ‘revolutionary guerrilla warfare based on the theory and practice of comrades in countries all over the world, whose tactics and strategy are adapted for and by our conditions’262 (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 60-61). The literature they had published with the Red Star, and other texts, thus constituted no more than a starting point for the founding members of the RC. Their ideological framework was less dogmatic and more dynamic than that of the RAF.

Like the MJ2, the founding members of the RC rejected the abstract language and the elitism of the RAF. In 1975, the group declared ‘We agree with the MJ2 that we want a popular guerrilla. A guerrilla whose activities can be understood, which enjoys the sympathy of the people, and works towards broad support without becoming opportunistic’263 (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 190). To achieve this aim, the RC based its activities on three key principles: ‘Verankerung’

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261 ‘Es gibt zwei Arten von Gewalt, es gibt zwei Arten von Toten. Die eine Seite der Gewalt ist die Gewalt der Herrschenden, zur Sicherung ihrer Herrschaft, zur Unterdrückung der Massen der Ausgebeuteten und Beleidigten, auf der anderen Seite gibt es den Widerstand kleiner Teile des Volkes, den Widerstand von Massen, den Widerstand auf verschiedenen Ebenen und in allen möglichen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen mit allen nur denkbaren Mitteln’


263 ‘Wir stimmen mit der Bewegung 2. Juni darin überein, dass wir eine Populäre Guerilla wollen! Eine Guerilla, deren Aktionen verstanden werden, die die Sympathie des Volkes genießt und die perspektivisch breit unterstützt wird, ohne deshalb opportunistisch zu werden’
[anchoring], ‘Vermassung’ [massification], and ‘Vermittlung’ [communication]. Anchoring meant in this context that the RC tried to focus on activities that tied in with existing campaigns and social movements and that promised to gain support within and beyond these circles (ibid.: 25).

The tactics and targets of attacks varied from context to context and depended, among other factors, on the acceptance of militant action within different protest movements. Massification meant two things to the RC. Firstly, they wanted to spread militant and armed forms of resistance on a large scale in and through existing groups and movements (ibid.: 29). Secondly, they wanted to incite the formation of more Revolutionary Cells. The RC-slogan ‘create many Revolutionary Cells’ [Schafft viele Revolutionäre Zellen!] enunciates this aim (see, e.g. ibid.: 121, 123, 182, 192). With the publication of Revolutionary Rage and other statements, the RC aimed to create a communicative structure that would allow them to explain their politics and to spread militant tactics. In 1986, the group even released a special edition of the Revolutionary Rage with ‘practical advice’ for others ‘who have decided to take up the revolutionary running battle in the metropoli’264 (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 493).

Unlike the RAF, the founding members of the RC were under no illusion about the ‘revolutionary potential’ of the German working class. Although there is evidence that the founding members of the RAF discussed the work of Herbert Marcuse and other theorists associated with the New Left (Gursch 2008: 123), the RAF’s ideology was dominated

264 ‘die sich entschlossen haben, den revolutionären Kleinkrieg in den Metropolen aufzunehmen’
by Marxist-Leninist ideas. Consequentially, the group identified the ‘revolutionary subject’ with the working class. When they formed the first Revolutionary Cell in Frankfurt in 1973, however, the founding members of this group had long realised that a revolutionary mass movement in West Germans would not develop overnight (*Die Früchte des Zorns* 1993: 129).

The RC’s position implied, as Irving Fetscher, Herfried Münkler and Hannelore Ludwig point out, a redefinition of the revolutionary subject. ‘Contrary to the RAF principles, which were mainly oriented towards Leninist models, the RC ideology was visibly influenced by existentialist ideas: The armed struggle of the subject became a central moment in revolutionary change’\(^{265}\) (Fetscher et al. 1981: 158). Whilst trying to appeal to workers in precarious social conditions and other socially vulnerable groups, the focus of the RC shifted from a struggle for a ‘revolutionary subject’ [revolutionäres Subjekt] to a struggle for a ‘rebelling subject’ [revoltierendes Subjekt] (Fetscher et al. 1981: 175).

Whereas the Marxist idea of a revolutionary subject identifies a group based on its position in a social or economic order, the notion of the rebelling subject can refer to any group that is active in struggle against the existing system. This meant that the RC was able to align with a wide range of groups and causes that were not determined either by their economic position or by their political disposition. In practice, this meant acting in support of a spectrum of existing movements and campaigns, from anti-Nuclear and anti-militarist movements to local

\(^{265}\) ‘Gegenüber den mehr an leninistischen Modellen orientierten Grundüberzeugungen der ‘RAF’ trat bei den ‘RZ’ stärker ein existentialistisches Denkmuster hervor: Die bewaffnete Revolte des Subjekts wurde zum Fixpunkt revolutionärer Veränderung’
single-issue campaigns. ‘Our aim is not to liberate the masses’, Brigitte Kuhlmann explained in 1975, ‘but to liberate ourselves, because we are part of them!’\textsuperscript{266} (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 70). According to the RC, there was no ‘before’ or ‘after’ the revolution. ‘To identify with us’, claimed the group in 1977, ‘means to understand that revolution is a constant process’\textsuperscript{267} (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 126).

While there are occasional references to the work of existentialist thinkers in RC statements (see, e.g. Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 126), I think that Fetscher et al overemphasise the influence of existentialist thought on the group and fail to consider the profound impact of feminist ideas on the RC ideology. What they describe as the ‘existentialist moment’ in the RC philosophy can also be understood as a lesson that Kuhlmann and her comrades had learned from the New Women’s Movement. Rather than explaining the RC ideology with reference to a single political movement or theoretical framework, we should acknowledge that it is likely that existentialism, feminism and a number of other currents all influenced the group’s thinking.\textsuperscript{268}

In 1980, a group member made this point particularly strongly. ‘Initially, we still had the idea in the back of our minds that the proletariat was the only true revolutionary subject in history. But the new understanding of the women’s movement had already begun to influence

\textsuperscript{266} ‘Nicht die Massen sollen sich durch uns befreien lassen, sondern wir wollen uns befreien; wir gehören nämlich dazu!’

\textsuperscript{267} ‘sich mit uns identifizieren heißt begreifen, dass Revolution immer ist’

\textsuperscript{268} For example, in a number of respects, features of RC theory and structure also show convergences with strands of anarchist thought: from the emphasis on decentralisation and non-hierarchical organisation, to the insistence on individual self-realisation in everyday life. RC founders do not appear to have been directly influenced by anarchism, or at least do not mention such connections. However, it may be possible that anarchist ideas had an indirect influence on the RC through circulation in the New Women’s Movement.
this static ideology’\textsuperscript{269} \textit{(Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 252). Rather than a form of applied existentialistism, the attempt to begin a broader revolution with personal liberation can be understood as a practical application of feminist ‘first person politics’\textsuperscript{270}.

Inspired by the New Women’s Movement, the RC wanted to spark off a revolution in and through everyday politics. In 1976, they argued: ‘We did not want to build Socialism in the distant future; for us, liberation is accomplished in everyday resistance, in our own lives’\textsuperscript{271} \textit{(Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 105). According to Brigitte Kuhlmann, the revolutionary struggle of the RC was as much about everyday politics and personal relationships as about armed confrontations. She notes: ‘We are working towards both an aggravation of social conflicts, the beginning of a guerrilla war against the ruling system, whilst trying to change ourselves and gradually liberate ourselves from all mechanisms that society implants in us as norms; in concrete terms that means, for instance, preventing the development of hierarchical structures’\textsuperscript{272} \textit{(Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 78). According to this philosophy, the militant feminist was a revolting subject \textit{par excellence}. She broke with the conventional notion of femininity to fight against the domination and exploitation of women and other oppressed groups. Considering the political importance that the

\textsuperscript{269} ‘Im Hinterkopf hatten wir [anfangs] noch die Vorstellung vom Proletariat als einzigem legitimen revolutionären Subjekt in der Geschichte. In dieser festgefügten Vorstellung hatte aber das neue Verständnis der Frauenbewegung schon Veränderungen bewirkt’

\textsuperscript{270} Chapter 1 includes a detailed discussion of the first person politics and other political principles of the New Women’s Movement.

\textsuperscript{271} ‘Wir wollen nicht eines fernen Tages den Sozialismus aufbauen sondern für uns vollzieht sich Befreiung im alltäglichen Widerstand, in unserem Leben’

\textsuperscript{272} ‘Wir versuchen beides Verschärfung gesellschaftlicher Widersprüche vorantreiben, Guerillakrieg gegen das Herrschaftssystem zu beginnen, gleichzeitig Änderung von uns selbst und schrittweise Befreiung von all den Mechanismen, die als die richtigen Normen dieser Gesellschaft uns eingepflanzt wurden; konkret heißt das z.B. Verhinderung der Herausbildung hierarchischer Strukturen’
feminist struggle had to the RC, it is surprising that only a small part of the group made active efforts to support it.

4.5 Activities

According to a 2004 court decision against alleged members, the RC committed more than 186 attacks between 1973 and 1995. Information provided by the department of Internal Affairs in North Rhine-Westphalia suggests that the number of attacks was considerably higher. Departmental officials estimate that members of the RC and the Red Zora committed 296 arson attacks, bombings and other attacks between 1973 and 1995 (Ministerium für Inneres und Kommunales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen 2004). Due to the sheer number of attacks and the range of social environments in which the RC operated, this discussion can only identify some of the many thematic and political priorities that emerged within the group. The overview shows that attacks with a feminist background such as the bombing in Karlsruhe constituted a relatively small part of the overall activities of the RC; but it also indicates that, in terms of tactics and political stance, this attack was more representative of the RC and its approach than the OPEC raid and the Entebbe hijacking.


274 As highlighted in Chapter 1, of the 90 RC attacks recorded by 1980, only five were attacks against people, the other 85 targeted property. Although I do not have a similar statistical breakdown for later attacks, qualitative evidence suggests that this pattern was maintained.
In the first issue of *Revolutionary Rage*, the RC claimed responsibility for 12 arson attacks and bombings between November 1973 and early May 1975. The group identified three central focal points in this period: ‘anti-imperialist attacks’, ‘anti-Zionist’ attacks, and attacks to support ‘the struggles of women, workers and young people’ (*Die Früchte des Zorns* 1993: 62). ‘Anti-imperialist struggle’, explained the RC in 1978, ‘is everything that fuels the destruction of the economic, political and cultural metropolis and counters it by promoting the human as measure of all things and by creating, in fighting collectives, a new society in embryonic forms’ (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 62). It follows from this broad definition that the ‘anti-imperialist’ struggle of the RC took many forms.

In November 1973, the RC executed a first series of ‘anti-imperialist’ attacks. Group members planted bombs at German branches of the ‘International Telephone and Telegraph’ company (ITT) in Berlin and Nuremberg, because they considered the company a driving force behind the military coup in Chile in September 1973. There is evidence that the RC was also responsible for a failed bombing against an ITT branch in Essen in October 1973, although the RC did not claim responsibility for this attack. In the claim of responsibility for the

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275 In addition to the eight attacks that are mentioned in the previous paragraph, the RC claimed responsibility for a series of three bombings in April 1975, which had targeted the seat of immigration authorities in Berlin and offices of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Mainz and Ludwigshafen (cf. BAK B 362/7363, BAK B 362/7505, BAK B 362/7506).

276 ‘Antimperialistischer Kampf das ist alles, was die Ruinierung der wirtschaftlichen, politischen und kulturellen Metropolen vorantreibt, um dagegen die Menschen als Maß aller Dinge zu setzen und in den kämpfenden Kollektiven die Keimformen einer neuen Gesellschaft zu verwirklichen.’

277 Like the attacks in Berlin and Nuremberg, the failed bombing in Essen targeted a local branch of the US company ITT. The perpetrators used an incendiary device and a self-made bomb that showed striking similarities to the explosives used in other attacks.
bombings in Berlin and Nuremberg, the RC declared that their bombings could only have a symbolic function. They intended to express solidarity with the Chilean people and to show that they were determined to fight against the ‘terror of capital’ [Terror des Kapitals] in Chile and other countries ‘with all available means’ [mit all den uns zur Verfügung stehenden Mitteln] (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 83).

Soon, the group delivered on this threat: on 12 June 1974, the RC attacked the General Consulate of Chile to underline their opposition to the military government in the Latin American country.\(^{278}\) Dozens of ‘anti-imperialist’ attacks followed in the course of the next 20 years. Some of them were directed against consular offices (e.g., against El Salvador in 1982 and Turkey in 1984). For the most part, they targeted branches of multi-national companies (e.g., Texas Instruments, IBM, Siemens and MAN) and military institutions (e.g., buildings used by US soldiers or NATO officials) throughout West Germany.

‘Anti-Zionist’ attacks constituted a second priority in the formative years of the RC. In a double strike on 28 June 1974, members of the RC planted bombs at the Israeli Transport Office in Frankfurt and the company Mohr & Federhaff in Mannheim (see Image 11 on the following page). In an anonymous letter to a German press agency, the perpetrators claimed that they had attacked these ‘Zionist’ institutions to avenge the murder of Mohamed Boudia\(^ {279}\) and to support the struggle of the

\(^{278}\) BAK B362/7362

\(^{279}\) Mohamed Boudia, a leading member of the PFLP in Europe, was killed by a car bomb in Paris on 28 June 1973.
Palestinian people.\textsuperscript{280} The OPEC raid in December 1975 constitutes another example of ‘anti-Zionism’ in the RC. Hans-Joachim Klein was the only RC member who was directly involved in the attack, but he reported to the police that Brigitte Kuhlmann and Sonja Suder had been actively involved in the preparations for the attack.

\textit{Image 11: The bombing at the Israeli Transport Office}

Source: BAK, B362-7379.

Klein is the main witness in the trial against Suder that began in 2012. As early as 1979, Klein told the news magazine \textit{Der Spiegel} that the RC was planning the assassination of Jewish authorities in West Germany (cf Klein 1979a: 82). As mentioned previously, the Entebbe debacle in 1976 marks a turning point in the history of ‘anti-Zionism’ in the RC. While the group did not comment on this development until the early 1990s, the failed hijacking led to internal discord, and ultimately, a

division of the RC. Apart from two bombings against importers of Israeli fruit in 1978 and 1979, groups operating within Germany committed no further attacks with an ‘anti-Zionist’ agenda.

The third priority of the RC was ‘to punish and attack the enemies’ of workers, women and young people. Exemplary of attacks with this focus are bombings at the Employer’s Association and the Federation of German Industry in 1975. In the claim of responsibility, the perpetrators presented these institutions as part of a capitalist ‘mafia’ who exploited workers in general and guest labourers\textsuperscript{281} and young apprentices in particular (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 85). Other activities that fall in this category were attacks against registers of ‘fare dodgers’ in Berlin and Frankfurt in 1976 and a range of attacks against the private property of individuals whom the RC considered profiteers of the exploitation of youth, workers and women. Such attacks included the demolition of private cars and other attacks against the property of managers, politicians and public prosecutors.

It seems that a rather small contingent of women in the RC was solely responsible for attacks with a feminist agenda: although, it should be added that there might have been one exception. On 2 March 1975, members of the Revolutionary Cell placed an incendiary device in a confessional box in the Cathedral in Bamberg to protest against the ‘dirty role of the Church in the oppression of women’\textsuperscript{282} (Die Früchte des Zorns

\textsuperscript{281} In the 1950s and 1960s, a period in which there was virtually no unemployment in West Germany, the FRG made bilateral agreements with Italy, Turkey, Portugal, Marrocco, Tunisia and other countries to recruit foreign workers on a temporary basis (for a detailed discussion of German immigration policies in this period, see: Herbert 2001). The women and men who accepted this invitation are often referred to as Gastarbeiter, which can be translated as guestlabourers or foreign workers.

\textsuperscript{282} ‘der schmutzigen Rolle der Kirche bei der Unterdrückung der Frauen’
1993: 62). My inquiry into the attack in Bamberg revealed evidence that the perpetrators were not part of the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’, as I had assumed, but two men who sought to express solidarity with their feminist comrades. Two days after the arson attack in Bamberg, the WoRC made their first appearance with the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice. The next feminist attack, however, did not take place before 1977 when a group of women in the RC planted a bomb at the headquarters of the German Medical Association in Cologne. In the claim of responsibility the women, who operated now under the name Red Zora sharply criticised the German Medical Association for its insistence on the abortion ban. The small number of feminist attacks in the history of the RC indicates that the struggle of women certainly did not constitute a priority for most group members.

Over the years, members of the RC tried to participate and intervene in a range of social movements and campaigns including the New Women’s Movement, local alliances against fare and rent increases, the squatting scene, the environmental movement, the ‘Anti-Startbahn-West-Bewegung’ in Frankfurt, and the Peace Movement. RC activities in this context ranged from the distribution of luncheon vouchers to homeless people in Berlin in 1976 and the demolition of ticket machines

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283 On 3 March 1975, a nun reported to the police that she had seen two young men in the Cathedral on the day of the attack. One of the visitors had been dressed sloppily and had attracted her attention because he had been tampering with a confessional box. The nun had asked the pair what they were doing in the Church, but they had not responded and left the Cathedral hurriedly (cf. BAK B 362/7384, ‘Vernehmungsvermerk der Bayrischen Landespolizei Kriminalinspektion Bamberg’, 4 March 1975). One of my informants confirmed that it was not the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ but two men who planted the incendiary device in the confessional box.

284 FMT, FB.07.102, ‘frauen erhebt euch und die welt erlebt euch’.

285 The ‘Anti-Startbahn-West-Bewegung’ was a heterogeneous alliance of local residents, environmental activists and other groups to stop an expansion of the airport in Frankfurt, which had been initiated in the 1960s.
in several German cities to bombings and acts of sabotage against companies, courts and office buildings. Whilst diversifying and adapting their tactics, the RC insisted on the need for militant forms of protest. As mentioned previously, their aim was to tie in with existing campaigns and to fuel militant tendencies within these contexts.

In the light of the growing institutionalisation and incorporation of alternative subcultures in West Germany, the RC committed further ‘anti-imperialist’ attacks and focused increasingly on issues of information technologies and migration. A number of RC attacks in the 1980s targeted buildings used by NATO and the US military. Moreover, in the mid-1980s, the RC executed a series of attacks against German companies whom they blamed for having business relations with the South African Apartheid regime (e.g., Daimler-Benz, Brüggemann & Brandt and REWE). A series of RC bombings in the mid- and late-1980s targeted foreigners’ registration offices, government agencies and companies who were involved in deportations. With these and other attacks, the group sought to campaign for the ‘free flow’ [freies Fluten] of refugees and migrants across national borders (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 415). In parts of the radical left, the RC campaign was criticised as a refugee campaign without refugees, which increased the political isolation of the RC in West Germany. While insisting on the need for militant forms of resistance, a part of the RC declared in the early 1990s the end of its armed struggle (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 24ff). Even if other members did not agree with this step, they could not stop the disintegration of the RC.
Rather than a common theme or specific goal, most attacks that the RC committed between the early 1970s and early 1990s shared a tactical approach. Wherever possible, the group avoided direct confrontations. Although the RC might well have used femininity as camouflage, there is no reported incident of a tactical recourse to feminine accessories or stereotypes. To encourage people to replicate their attacks, the RC tried to use simple weapons (for an example, see: Image 12) and targeted public institutions.

*Image 12: Basic Incendiary Device Used in RC Attack*

Source: BAK, B362-7383.

Donatella Della Porta observes that the RC used ‘somewhat less brutal tactics’ than the RAF (Della Porta 1995: 125). Unlike the RAF, the RC tried to avoid ‘using guns and sophisticated explosives, and stated that they wanted to carry out their revolution using (with imagination) “everyday” materials – such as glue to destroy the much hated ticket
machines\textsuperscript{286} or other easy-to-find ingredients for small “home-made” bombs’ (ibid.). Evidence suggests that this tactical approach proved to be successful. In 1989, the president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution claimed that the number of attacks by imitators and small groups who identified with the RC had long outnumbered attacks by the ‘original’ group (Bundesminister des Innern 1989: 67).

Whilst focusing on attacks against property, the RC was not \textit{per se} against the use of guns. After RAF members killed Federal Public Prosecutor Siegfried Buback in 1977, the members of a Revolutionary Cell called openly for further attacks against public authorities: ‘Create many Bubacks!’\textsuperscript{287} (\textit{Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 120). Parts of the RC did not merely approve of violence against representatives of the state and international companies: as we have seen, members of the internationalist wing of the RC actually participated in several fatal attacks. In the 1980s, RC members took up a practice of the Italian \textit{Brigate Rosse} and tried to punish state authorities by ‘kneecapping’ them. On 11 May 1981, the Hessian politician Heinz-Herbert Karry died in such an attack. Whilst emphasising that Karry’s death had been an ‘accident’, the RC showed no regrets: ‘That Karry had to go to the happy hunting-grounds concerns us only in so far as it was not planned, and so the action failed to achieve its aim’\textsuperscript{288} (\textit{Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 339). These actions and statements show that at least some members of the RC were

\textsuperscript{286} Here, Della Porta refers to a RC-campaign against increased fares in public transport in several German cities, which involved – among other things – the demolition of ticket machines.

\textsuperscript{287} ‘Schafft viele Bubacks!’

\textsuperscript{288} ‘Daß Karry durch diesen Zufall die Reise in die ewigen Jagdgründe antreten musste, bekümmert uns ausschließlich insofern, als dies nicht geplant war, wir damit das Aktionsziel verfehlten’
not on principle opposed to fatal violence against people. However, the large majority of RC actions targeted property, and took precautions not to place lives in danger. The Federal Court bombing by the Women of the Revolutionary Cell provides a good example of the general tactical approach of the RC.

4.6 Case Study: The Bombing at the Federal Court of Justice in March 1975

4.6.1 The Context

This case study offers a detailed discussion of the first bombing in the FRG with an explicitly feminist agenda. Since the actors involved were never identified, and there is virtually no secondary literature on the attack, this analysis draws primarily on archival sources. These include a range of police files from the Federal Archives in Koblenz as well a claim of responsibility and responses to the attack (found at the feminist archive Frauenmediaturm, Cologne). In addition to these sources, the case study draws on a number of newspaper articles and scholarly publications that help to throw light on the political and historical context of the attack.

In June 1974, the judges at the highest German court were given a difficult task. They had to decide about the legal force of a controversial law that affected the lives of millions of people. For more than 100 years, abortions had been criminal acts in Germany (Schulz 2002: 143). Following the example of a range of other countries, including the GDR, the social-liberal government in West Germany in the early 1970s proposed legislation that exempted abortions within the first three months of pregnancies from punishment.
The parliament approved the reform in April 1974 with a narrow majority, but members of the CDU filed suit at the Federal Court of Justice (Lenz 2010: 71). In its decision on 25 February 1975, the highest German court ruled in favour of the claimants. The judges found the legal reform incompatible with the sanctity of human life as defined by the constitution (Helwig 1997). They ruled: ‘The protection of the foetus, as a matter of principle and for the entire duration of the pregnancy, has priority over the self-determination of the pregnant woman and must not be called into question for any period of time’\textsuperscript{289}.

The decision on the ban on abortions troubled the judges and divided the country. After the president of the court, Ernst Benda, had read the judgement, two members of the court, including the only female judge, declared that they dissented from the decision. One of the majority judges then left the room in a statement of discontent with the two dissenters. This unusual conduct was seen as an offence to his colleagues, and constitutes a unique act in the history of the court (Lamprecht 2011: 157-158). To add to the scandal, the outcome of the negotiations in Karlsruhe leaked to the public more than a week before the judgement. While representatives of the Catholic and the Protestant Church, the CDU, and the German Medical Association all welcomed the judgement

(Strobel 2004), liberal and progressive politicians and medics in West Germany, who had supported a legal reform, criticised the decision.

The ruling was a hard blow to women in West Germany. According to conservative estimates from the early 1970s, every day 500 West German women – mostly poor and with a working class background – had an illegal abortion, often under insanitary and dangerous conditions (‘Abtreibung: Massenmord oder Privatsache?’ 1973). For years, feminist groups in West Germany had drawn on a range of tactics to promote the decriminalisation of abortion. They organised public self-denunciations, petitions, mass demonstrations and creative protests to achieve their aim. The campaign against paragraph 218 mobilised feminist groups and individuals across the political spectrum and won the support of women all over the country. As early as 1971, polls had revealed that 83% of the women in West Germany declared themselves in favour of the decriminalisation of abortion (‘Der Aufstand’ 1991: 18). The decision by the judges in Karlsruhe, however, was incontestable. This meant that the many opponents of paragraph 218 were left with no legal means to proceed against the ban on abortion.

In February 1976, the parliament passed a modified version of the law that it had adopted in 1974. The new legislation exempted abortions within the first three months from punishment if pregnant women could persuade independent medical experts that their situation was so dreadful that they could not be expected to continue the pregnancy. In the

\[\text{290} \quad \text{In March 1974, a group of 329 medics publicly announced in the weekly } \text{Spiegel} \text{ that they had helped women to have an abortion and would keep on doing so to support the campaign against the abortion ban (‘Hiermit erkläre ich...’ 1974).} \]

\[\text{291} \quad \text{For a detailed discussion of the feminist campaign against the abortion ban and its central role in the development of the New Women’s Movement, see the discussion in Chapter 1.} \]
eyes of many women, the so-called ‘indication model’ [Indikationsmodell] was a weak compromise, because it was yet another law that denied women the right to self-determination.

After reunification in 1990, East and West Germany kept applying different abortion laws until the Federal Court of Justice passed a temporary solution that was mandatory for the entire Republic. Prior to the court’s decision, the former East German States continued to apply the so-called ‘time-phase solution’ [Fristenlösung], which decriminalised all abortions during the first trimester of pregnancy. In 1995, the parliament passed an adapted version of paragraph 218 that is still valid to this day.

Before and after the first judgement by the Federal Court of Justice in 1975, the feminist protest against paragraph 218 took many forms, including demonstrations, leafleting and organised trips to abortion clinics in the Netherlands. Although the overwhelming majority of these protests were carried out in a peaceful manner, there were exceptions: some feminists used violence against property to express their opposition to the decision in Karlsruhe. While the campaign against paragraph 218 received great attention in literature on the history of the New Women’s Movement, even some of the most detailed discussions of the protest against the abortion ban do not mention the fact that there was also violent protest against the abortion ban (Schulz 2002, 2004, Gerhard 2008). Due to its almost exclusive focus on violence against people, a great part of the existing research on political violence and terrorism in West Germany has not dealt with militant feminist protest either. This case study seeks to contribute to both the historiography of the New
Women’s Movement and to research on political violence in Germany by offering a brief overview of violent protest against the judgement. The focus of the discussion is therefore on one particularly militant attack: a bombing at the Federal Court of Justice in March 1975 by a group of militant feminists and feminist militants in the RC.

When the ruling leaked to the public, women’s groups organised protests in several German cities, including Bonn, Berlin, Hamburg, Munich and Karlsruhe (‘Selbstherrlich und zynisch’ 1975). The women who participated in these demonstrations made no secret of their disappointment about the decision and their anger against the authorities and institutions that they deemed responsible for it: the Federal Court of Justice, the Churches, and the German Medical Association. Some of this protest caused minor property damage.

On 16 February, women poured red paint on the stairs to the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, a famous church in Berlin. They had chosen ‘red paint as symbol for blood, the blood of the women who die during illegal abortions’ (Zimmer 1975). Church authorities condemned the event and called on the state to protect their churches against such radical protests (‘Von hinten gegriffen’ 1975). In Frankfurt, police attacked participants of a demonstration with batons and tear gas, allegedly because the crowd tried to prevent officers from arresting a young man who had been caught writing on a wall. During the same demonstration, a group of women burnt three rag dolls – one dressed as a clergyman, one as a medic and one as a judge (‘Von hinten gegriffen’

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292 ‘rote Farbe als Symbol für Blut, für das Blut der Frauen, die bei illegalen Abtreibungen ums Leben kommen’
1975). Apparently, this symbolic act of violence was no isolated event. According to *Der Spiegel*, protesters in other German cities had planned similar actions for the day of the judgement (‘Selbstherrlich und zynisch’ 1975).

Feminist protests against the decision of the judges in Karlsruhe did not spare the courts. On the day of the judgement, a group of women chained themselves to the gates of the Federal Administrative Court in Berlin (Schulz 2002: 170). A few women expressed their protest against the judgement with physical attacks against the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe. In 1969, the Federal Court had moved from its previous seat, the Prinz-Max Palais, into a newly constructed building less than a kilometre away. The new complex had a light and open design to suggest ‘democratic transparency’.

It was clothed almost entirely in glass and consisted of five parts connected with glass bridges.

At the heart of the 20 million Mark construction was a three-storey building that accommodated the courtroom, a reception lobby and several conference rooms (‘Ein Bauwerk mit Anspruch auf Qualität’ 1969). This part of the court was designed as a meeting point for journalists, visitors and members of the court. It was open to the public during the day (see Image 13 on the following page). Night and day, two police officers guarded the building, typically from within a sentry box positioned 60 meters from the building. The officers inspected vehicles that approached

293 On its official website, the Federal Court of Justice states: ‘Die offene Bauweise soll den Eindruck demokratischer Transparenz vermitteln’ (source: [http://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/organisation/gebaeude.html](http://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/organisation/gebaeude.html), date consulted: 20 May 2012)
the court. Pedestrians, however, could access the court through the surrounding Schlossgarten, without having to pass any controls.

On at least two occasions, women used this entrance to commit attacks against the highest German court to protest against the abortion ban. The first attack on the court caused only minor damage. Apparently, a group of feminist protesters entered the compound during opening hours. One observer reported that some of the women distracted the guards, while others wrote in big letters ‘My belly belongs to me!’ [Mein Bauch gehört mir!] on the glass façade of the reception hall (Lamprecht 2011: 159). As we shall see, the attack by feminists in the RC caused considerably more damage.
4.6.2 The Attack

On 4 March, a group of women planted a bomb at the Federal Court of Justice. It is not clear when and how the perpetrators entered the compound, but there is good reason to believe that they walked into the Schlossgarten in the middle of the day and passed as ordinary visitors. Unnoticed by the two police officers, they attached a time bomb with magnets to one of the steel girders at the glass facade of the reception hall. At 8.07 pm, the explosive device detonated. Since no employees or visitors were in the building at this time of day, the bomb did not hurt or kill anyone. But it caused substantial material damage: 47 linear metres of glass – the entire façade on the ground level and several windows on the first floor of the building – shattered under the pressure of the detonation. Moreover, the bomb destroyed parts of the floor, damaged the ceiling in the entrance hall and destroyed furniture in the foyer. Overall, the estimated damage to the building amounted to 150,000 Marks (Kühnert 1975).

One day after the bombing, the editors of several West German newspapers and a publishing house in Berlin received envelopes with photocopies of a typed letter. Further copies of the statement were found in the following days in a leftist bookstore in Heidelberg and in a telephone booth in Cologne. In the short text, the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ claimed responsibility for the attack. After inspecting

294 BAK, B 362/7379, letter from the state criminal police Baden-Wuerttemberg from 29 April 1975, p. 3.
295 According to a letter from the state criminal police of Baden-Württemberg from 29 April 1975, the perpetrators posted their declaration to the editors of Der Spiegel, Stuttgarter Zeitung, Kölner Stadtanzeiger, Frankfurter Rundschau, and to the Axel Springer publishing house (source: BAK, B 362/7379, p. 4).
296 Ibid.
the crime scene and examining the claim of responsibility, police authorities declared that they considered it likely that the perpetrators were who they claimed to be, because members of the ‘Revolutionary Cell’ had executed similar attacks in the past (‘Spuren zum BVG-Anschlag’ 1975). Indeed, a comparison with previous bombings by the RC reveals that the attack in Karlsruhe was typical of the approach of the group for four reasons.

Firstly, all bombings that the RC carried out between 1973 and 1975 were directed against buildings in publicly accessible areas. Secondly, the group placed the bombs in locations that could easily be reached without entering the buildings – usually a window on the ground level. In some cases, including the attack at the Federal Court of Justice, the perpetrators attached a bomb with magnets to a steel girder at a front window. Thirdly, the bombs were homemade and had the same components: up to 1000 grams of strong explosives, conventional batteries and an electric alarm clock that the perpetrators had converted into a time fuse. This detail is significant because, at the time, the RC was the only militant leftist group in West Germany who used bombs of this design.

Fourthly, the bombs detonated at times of the day when no staff or visitors were using the facilities – typically in the evening or the early morning hours. As a result, none of the RC attacks prior to the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice hurt or killed people. Evidence in the Federal Archives suggests that these previous attacks had caused property

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damage totalling at least 850,000 DM. Since the bombing in Karlsruhe complied with all four features, it was perfectly in line with the RC tactics.

The feminist agenda of the attack, however, constituted a novelty in the history of the RC. The ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ declared that they had planted the bomb in Karlsruhe to protest against the court’s decision on the abortion ban. Rather than claiming to fight for workers, people in the Third World or other oppressed people, the perpetrators made demands as women and acted on their own behalf. To this extent, the attack can be understood as the first practical application of the previously mentioned feminist ‘first-person politics’ in the history of the RC.

While the RC wanted to intervene in a range of local and international struggles, there is no evidence that group members were directly affected by any of the oppressive structures that they denounced. Prior to the bombing in Karlsruhe, members of the RC had committed arson attacks against the cars of a factory owner and of a politician who wanted to shut down a youth centre in Berlin to express solidarity with workers and the local youth. They had planted bombs at Chilean institutions and US companies to protest against the dictatorship in Chile, and they had attacked Israeli institutions to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. The Women of the Revolutionary Cell were the first group members who fought for themselves and emphasised the personal dimension of their violent protest.

In the claim of responsibility, the WoRC adopted a position that might be described as anarchist feminist. They claimed that it made no difference to them whether six judges or 600 members of parliament
decided about women’s reproductive rights and other important issues, as they were opposed to all forms of political representation. Contrary to liberal and socialist critics of paragraph 218, the WoRC emphasised that they did not understand the court’s decision as a misinterpretation of the constitution. Rather, the group considered the constitution itself to be an effective tool of state oppression. The women explained that they had planted the bomb:

Not to protect the constitution against the Federal Court of Justice [...], but to protect us from the constitution; a constitution that provides the legal framework for the daily exploitation, attrition, and psychological breakdown of millions of women and men. A constitution that illegalises women and that incites the death of many women who do not want to accept that the mafia of medics and judges decides about their relations to their own bodies and the number of children they have.299

In line with millions of other women in West Germany, the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ demanded the right to decide freely about their bodies and sexuality. In their claim of responsibility, the group criticised judges, medics and clerics who opposed a decriminalisation of abortions. Their tone was more aggressive than that of most opponents of the abortion ban. They referred to politicians and judges as ‘sleazebags’ and encouraged women to publicly shame and beat
up medics who made money with illegal abortions. The WoRC accused the Churches of a ‘fascist structure’ [faschistische Struktur] dividing women into ‘mothers and whores, “purified” by or punished for their sexuality with pregnancy’ and referred to priests as ‘pitiful chickenfuckers’ [armselige Hühnerficker]. ‘We have not forgotten’, declared the group, ‘that, in the Middle Ages, they [i.e. churchmen] burnt our feminist sisters at the stake’. While their name identifies them as part of the Revolutionary Cell, their statement suggests that the perpetrators also identified as feminists.

The attack itself and the claim of responsibility indicate that the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ deemed violence a legitimate and necessary means to overcome patriarchal structures. Even if the perpetrators minimised the risk of casualties by detonating the bomb at the courthouse at a time when nobody was in the building, they were not opposed to violence against people. In the claim of responsibility, they expressed solidarity with all women who ‘got rid of the men who exploit them’, and they openly called for attacks against medics who earned money with illegal abortions and other ‘enemies of the people’ [Volksfeinde] – capitalists, clergymen, politicians, judges and parts of the press. According to the WoRC, the state could not protect all public authorities, and they mentioned the abduction of the politician Peter

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300 ‘entweder Mütter oder Huren, geläutert bzw. bestraft für ihre Sexualität durch Schwangerschaft’
302 ‘die sich ihren Unterdrücker vom Hals schaffen’
303 Ibid.
Lorenz a few days before their own attack as a case in point. They tried to encourage workers, students and women to follow their example by forming guerrilla groups and asserting their demands by force. The claim of responsibility ended with the following sentence: ‘The day will come, when women rise up... but only if we get things moving today’.

4.6.3 Public Responses

A few hours after the bomb had exploded at the Federal Court of Justice, Peter Lorenz regained his freedom after six days of captivity in a basement in Berlin-Kreuzberg. In the following days, the cover pages of national and local newspapers were preoccupied with the kidnapping in Berlin. Due to the media hype about this attack, the courthouse bombing received very little attention in the German press. While attacks against property attracted generally less media interest than assassinations, kidnappings and other attacks against people, the bombing in Karlsruhe received considerably less attention than similar attacks in the history of the RC. With a few exceptions, newspapers ignored the attack or mentioned it in passing. Only the Frankfurter Rundschau and a few newspapers from the Karlsruhe area went into more detail about the bombing. Most of these reports were based on information that the Federal Minister of Justice Hans-Jochen Vogel provided in a press conference the day after the attack.

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304 Ibid.
305 ‘Der Tag wird kommen, wo die Frauen sich erheben... aber nicht, ohne daß wir uns heute schon bewegen’ (source: Ibid.).
306 The case study in Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the kidnapping.
In his press conference on 5 March, Vogel left no doubt that he understood the bombing as a ‘challenge to the state’ and as an ‘attack against the constitutional principle that this institution engendered’\(^{307}\) (‘Anschlag in Karlsruhe noch ungeklärt’ 1975, Kühnert 1975). The *Frankfurter Rundschau* expressed a similar view: “The attack in Karlsruhe did not destroy a random building. The bombing was directed against an institution that represents the state. The Federal Court of Justice, a centrepiece of this democracy and accorded great significance by the constitution, became the object of fanaticism that could express itself no longer in anything but blind hatred”\(^{308}\) (‘Blinder Hass’ 1975). Other politicians and journalists supported this position (‘“Revolutionäre Zelle” bekennt sich zu BVG-Anschlag’ 1975, ‘Blinder Hass’ 1975).

During the press conference, journalists speculated about a relation between the attack in Karlsruhe and the kidnapping in Berlin as well as between the bombing and the decision on the abortion ban, but Vogel refused to comment on these presumptions. After examining the claim of responsibility, state authorities conceded that the bombing was indeed related to the feminist protest against the court’s decision on paragraph 218. Vogel posted an award of 50,000 DM for information that would lead to the arrest of the perpetrators, who had disappeared without a trace.\(^{309}\)

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\(^{307}\) ‘Anschlag als ‘Herausforderung des Staates’, der das rechtstaatliche Grundprinzip, das sich in dieser Institution verkörpere, treffen sollte’

\(^{308}\) ‘Der Karlsruher Anschlag zertrümmerte nicht ein beliebiges Gebäude. Die Bombe sollte eine Institution treffen, sichtbare Repräsentanz des Staates. Das Bundesverfassungsgericht, ein Kernstück dieser Demokratie und durch das Grundgesetz mit hohem Rang versehen, ist das Objekt eines Fanatismus geworden, der sich nur noch in blindem Hass zu artikulieren vermag.’

It is difficult to draw a nuanced picture of the reactions and discussions that the bombing in Karlsruhe and statement by the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ sparked in feminist groups in West Germany. Given that the ban on abortions was a central topic in the New Women’s Movement, I was surprised to find that the results of an extensive search for direct responses to the attack at the Federal Court of Justice were scant. Only a few women’s groups commented on the attack in public. Two days after the bombing, the newspaper Die Welt reported that 13 women’s groups had distanced themselves resolutely from the attack (‘Frauen bekennen: Wir legten die Bombe’ 1975).

There is no reason to doubt that most women in West Germany rejected the effectively anarchist position of the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’, and that a great part of the New Women’s Movement opposed violent protest against the ban on abortions. In addition, feminists might have feared that the bombing and other violent protest against the judgement could associate the women’s movement as a whole with violence. For the most part, feminists in West Germany chose not to comment on the bombing at all. I found only one example of a group of women who chose a third path. The autonomous feminist magazine Frauenzeitung: Frauen gemeinsam sind stark [Women’s Newspaper: Women Together Are

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310 I have consulted four Women’s archives: Frauenmediaturm in Cologne, the FFBIZ in Berlin, the ‘Auszeiten’ archive in Bochum. I have also searched for responses to the attack in the Papiertiger archive in Berlin, in the Federal Archives, the IISH in Amsterdam, the HIS archive in Hamburg and in the newspaper department of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin.

311 Alas, the unidentified author decided not to specify this claim any further or to mention the names of the thirteen groups.
Strong\[^{312}\] reprinted the full claim of responsibility by the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’. Rather than condemning or endorsing the bombing, the editors of the fifth issue of the Frauenzeitung confined themselves to the following comment (capitalised in the original):

AFTER THE EDITORIAL DEADLINE FOR THIS ISSUE, WE RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION BY THE WOMEN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CELL THAT WE PRINT WORD-FOR-WORD FOR DOCUMENTARY REASONS. PLEASE SEND LETTERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PAPER OF THESE COMRADES TO THE EDITORS OF THE NEXT ISSUE!\[^{313}\].

The next issue of the Frauenzeitung, however, included neither readers’ letters nor a discussion of the claim of responsibility.\[^{314}\] Whether there was simply nothing to publish, or the editors decided not to include the contributions they had received, the effect was the same. The discussion (or lack of such) in the Frauenzeitung is expressive of the silence with which the bombing in Karlsruhe seems to have been met in the New Women’s Movement.

It should be added that this public silence does not necessarily reflect a lack of discussion within feminist circles. In the course of the 1970s, the New Women’s Movement created a diverse network of local

[^{312}: FMT, PD-SE.11.15, Frauenzeitung: Frauen gemeinsam sind stark, Nr. 5.
[^{314}: I owe this insight to Jasmin Schenk from the FrauenMediaTurm, who assisted me with the research.}
and national organisations, social centres, bookstores, publishing houses, magazines and other social platforms, where women met, discussed and organised campaigns (cf. Doderer 1999: 6, Hertrampf 2008). As highlighted in Chapter 1, different forms of violence, including the activities of militant leftist groups, became a central topic of discussion in these social sites (Altbach 1984: 466-467), even if the actors involved in this debate have disclosed their views only in part to a wider audience. Since the available data provides no insight into the ‘offstage speeches, gestures, and practices’ (Scott 1990: 4-5) of feminists at the time, we can hardly draw a nuanced picture of women’s responses to the attack. A range of feminist publications, public statements, conferences and other activities in the late 1970s, however, give valuable insights into the extensive debate on violence in the New Women’s Movement in the following years. The first chapter of this thesis provides a brief overview of this debate.

Trying to research reactions to the courthouse bombing in the radical left, I experienced similar difficulties as when tracing responses by groups and individuals associated with the New Women’s Movement. To conclude, I want to briefly note two reactions from the radical and militant leftist spectrum, although these are of course by no means representative of this diverse scene. The reaction of the Frankfurt based ‘Sponti’ newspaper Wir Wollen Alles [We Want Everything]315 was similar to that of the Frauenzeitung. The editors decided to print the claim of responsibility but did not add any comments. In the following years, the magazine’s editors took a more explicit stance on the politics of

the RC and criticised the group openly.\footnote{Some of the most vocal critics of the politics of the Revolutionary Cell and other militant leftist groups in the sponti-scene in Frankfurt were the future politicians Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Joschka Fischer (for a detailed description of the position of both, see: Siemens, 2006).} A prison note from Ulrike Meinhof indicates that the detained founding members of the RAF were also dismissive of the tactics of the RC in general and of the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice in particular. As highlighted in Chapter 2, Meinhof’s scathing criticism read as follows: “Their [i.e. the WoRC] action against the Federal Court of Justice was shit, a substitute for the slacking movement, which cannot be revived with such an action; especially because they have chosen the wrong target”\footnote{’ihre aktion gegen den BVG war schieße, substitut der abschaffenden 218-bewegung, die so nicht hochzukriegen ist. zumal der addressat der falsche war’ (source: HIS, Me, U/008,003).} Against the background of the gendered language of the RAF, it comes as no surprise that Meinhof uses a strikingly phallic metaphor to comment on the development of the feminist movement in the FRG.\footnote{In a more detailed analysis of Meinhof’s writings, Sarah Colvin highlights that the word ‘cunt’ [Votze] was ‘standart terminology’ in the RAF (Colvin 2009: 208-209).}

\section*{4.6.4 Discussion: A Struggle on Two Fronts}

On 4 March 1975, a group of women in the RC committed the first bombing in the history of political violence in West Germany that had an explicitly feminist agenda. Previous protests against the abortion ban had occasionally involved attacks against property. The bombing by the WoRC, however, took feminist militancy to an entirely new level. In the claim of responsibility, the WoRC encouraged other women to follow their example and use violence against politicians, churchmen, judges or medics and other public authorities who blocked a decriminalisation of
abortions. ‘Let’s catch the worst ones and beat them up’, claimed the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’; ‘tarring and feathering them could also be an option’\textsuperscript{319} (ibid.: 90).

In the first issue of \textit{Revolutionary Rage}, the ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’ expanded on their motives and aims. Here they declared that they had attacked the Federal Court of Justice for two reasons. Firstly, they sought to defend themselves against ‘the constitution of this imperialist state, to fight against this shameful verdict of class justice and the hypocrisy of priests and medics’\textsuperscript{320}. Secondly, they wanted to convince other feminists that ‘consciousness-raising groups, women’s shops, self-help (abortion) etc. are not sufficient to stop the dreadful activities of medics, priests and notorious chauvinists’\textsuperscript{321} (\textit{Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 64), unless they were combined with violent protest. Both the claim of responsibility and the short statement in \textit{Revolutionary Rage} illustrate that it was a principal aim of militant feminists and feminist militants in the RC to spread militant forms of protest in the New Women’s Movement.

In 1993, some of the women who had participated in the bombing – and who now operated under the name ‘Red Zora’ – explained why they considered violence essential to the liberation of women:

\textsuperscript{319} ‘Schnappen wir uns die schlimmsten und verprügeln sie, teeren und federn wäre auch eine Möglichkeit’
\textsuperscript{320} ‘um uns gegen die Verfassung dieses imperialistischen Staates zu schützen, um gegen dieses Schandurteil der Klassenjustiz, gegen die Heuchelei von Pfaffen und Kurpfuschern vorzugehen.’
\textsuperscript{321} ‘wir der Frauenbewegung zeigen, dass Selbsterfahrungsgruppen, Frauenläden, Selbsthilfe (Abtreibung) usw. nicht genügen, daß Ärzte, Pfaffen, notorische Chauvinisten nicht länger ihr Unwesen treiben dürfen’
But every woman who once threw a stone, who did not quietly accept sexual assault but hit back instead, will understand how liberated we felt when we destroyed sex shops or planted a bomb in front of the Federal Court of Justice on the occasion of the judgement on paragraph 218. In this society, liberation requires destruction. We need to destroy the structures that chain us to the role of woman; and we can only destroy these structures if we attack the conditions that seek to destroy us. These attacks have to be consistent with our intransigent hatred against this society, but they can take many different forms. Even if this position is hardly developed in the women’s movement, we consider armed attacks an essential part of the women’s struggle.\(^3\)\(^2\) (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 214)

According to feminists in the RC, destruction and violence are both essential to overcome the existing gender regime. To the extent that the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice, attacks against sex shops, violent resistance against sexually abusive men, and other violent acts by women break with the notion of woman as caring and nurturing mother (to be), as passive victim, and as object of male desire, they become active steps towards the liberation of women.

The Women of the Revolutionary Cell had two aims. On the one hand, they wanted to bring more militancy into the women’s movement; on the other hand, they wanted to bring more feminism into the militant

Left. For two reasons, this project proved difficult. Firstly, responses to the first attack by the WoRC in the women’s movement and on the radical Left ranged from cautious expressions of solidarity to open opposition. Many feminist critics of the abortion ban distanced themselves from the bombing because they opposed militant protest; Ulrike Meinhof and other members of the militant Left dismissed it because it was not militant enough. Secondly, the WoRC did not take a unified stance when it came to the question of how to practice and promote feminism in the RC. As this chapter has shown, only some of the women in the RC identified as feminists – some of them as militant feminists, others as feminist militants. Since feminist militants felt personally affected by the decision on the abortion ban, they joined forces with other women in the group and planted the bomb at the Federal Court of Justice. Yet, according to them, the women’s struggle was no more important than other struggles.

Militant feminists in the RC also felt directly affected by the decision on the abortion ban. They, too, considered violence a vital means for women to assert their demands. They did not want to accept that feminist politics in the RC were limited to occasional attacks related to women’s issues. They understood the struggle for women’s liberation as a condition sine qua non for revolutionary change. A statement from 1993 illustrates that some of the women involved vividly remembered ‘the demoralising, never ending arguments, in which we tried to explain and assert that the women’s struggle is no single issue movement and that the
liberation from patriarchy is a foundation for any liberation’\textsuperscript{323} (Die Rote Zora 1993).

Apparently, they tried to convince their comrades in the RC during long conversations that it was not enough to challenge patriarchal structures outside the group. They found it equally important to fight against patriarchal structures \textit{within} the group, to overcome internalised gender norms and to tackle androcentric theories and concepts that circulated in the group. Over the years, they became aware that they could not impose their politics on the group as a whole.

The diversified and decentralised structure of the RC allowed militant feminists in the group not only to plan and commit attacks with a feminist agenda. It also enabled them to form a women’s guerrilla that could draw on the experiences and infrastructure of the militant network. For several years, militant feminists in the RC operated as a largely autonomous sub-group that became known as the ‘feminist wing’ of the militant network (Rabert 1995: 198). However, over the years, the group became increasingly dissatisfied with its position in the RC.

On the one hand, the women found that many of their comrades proved reluctant to consider feminist perspectives in campaigns on ‘general’ political issues such as prisoner support, defence of squatted buildings and ‘anti-imperialist’ attacks (Die Rote Zora 1993). On the other hand, they also found that they were effectively the only group members who took up ‘women’s issues’ such as the abortion ban and who actively tried to spread militancy in the New Women’s Movement. Rather than

\textsuperscript{323} ‘Die zermürbenden, nie enden wollenden Streitereien, in denen wir begreiflich zu machen und durchzusetzen versuchten, dass Frauenkampf kein Teilbereichskampf sein kann, sondern dass die Befreiung vom Patriarchat grundlegend für jede Befreiung ist’
challenging the – in their eyes problematic – distinction between ‘women’s issues’ and ‘general topics’, the feminist wing of the RC effectively helped to maintain this division by dealing with women’s issues for the entire group. In 1984, they broke away from the RC to form an independent women’s group. The next chapter offers a detailed description of this process.
5. The Red Zora

5.1 Introduction

Compared to the other groups at the centre of this study, the Red Zora was relatively small and kept a low profile. To this day, scholars, journalists and the police know little about the group and even less about its members. No member of the RZ came even close to reaching the public attention devoted to Ulrike Meinhof and other women in the RAF and the MJ2. In fact, most members of the RZ are not even known by name. This chapter constitutes the first scholarly attempt to discuss the history, ideology and activities of the Red Zora.

While this overview is necessarily sketchy, it offers crucial insights into the life of an organisation that adopted, combined and challenged principles of the militant Left and of the New Women’s Movement in West Germany. While both had common origins, these two movements evolved in different directions in the 1970s and took a very different stance on violence. Against this background, it was difficult – in the eyes of some critics impossible – for the Red Zora to adopt an intermediate position. Inspired by these two movements, the RZ developed a distinctively feminist concept of ‘counter-violence’ that it tried to put into practice in dozens of arson attacks and bombings between 1977 and 1995.

The case study in this chapter provides a concrete example of this feminist approach to violence. While many attacks in the history of the Red Zora deserve closer attention, I have chosen to focus on one of the few campaigns by the RZ that made national headlines: a series of arson attacks against the German clothing chain ‘Adler’ in 1987. The Red Zora
committed these attacks to express solidarity with striking women workers at a South Korean factory that produced clothes for Adler. The discussion in the case study illustrates that the attacks met with strong criticism from some in the Women’s Movement. However, not all feminists were categorically opposed to militant protest. Some openly supported the attacks; others endorsed a diversity of tactics but criticised that the members of the Red Zora had failed to create a dialogue with the women they wanted to support. While these critics promoted a form of solidarity that resembles Jodi Dean’s (1996) notion of ‘reflective solidarity’, the Red Zora followed a different approach. The members of the RZ expressed their solidarity with the women in South Korea in a form that I define in this chapter as ‘proactive solidarity’.

5.2 Data Collection: Green Tea with the Red Zora

At the point when the data for this study were collected, there was not a single quantitative or qualitative study of the RZ. A few scholarly publications and government reports mention the group, but none of these studies provides an in-depth discussion (see, e.g. Boeden 1989, Rabert 1995, Bundesminister des Innern 1988, Diewald-Kerkmann 2009, Melzer 2009, Lenz 2010). Even the authors of publications on female participation in political violence in West Germany (see, e.g. Diewald-Kerkmann 2009) and on the New Women’s Movement in the FRG (see, e.g. Schläeger and Vedder-Shults 1978, Altbach 1984, Frevert 1986, Haug 1986, Schulz 2004) have shown surprisingly little interest in the RZ. Due to the lack of secondary literature, this chapter draws mainly on data that
I have collected in archives and in interviews with three former group members.

So far, only three women have been found guilty of membership in the Red Zora. All had surrendered to the police voluntarily after years of hiding. Corinna Kawaters stood trial in 1998, Adrienne Gerhäuser in 2007 and Juliane Balke in 2010. The three women were all acquitted due to time limitations on the charges against them. While the trial against Balke attracted hardly any public attention, the court proceedings against the other two women were met with considerable media interest. The press coverage on the occasion of the trials against Kawaters and Gerhäuser offered rare insights into the biographies and political development of former members of the Red Zora.

While the biographies of the two women are not necessarily representative of those of other group members, they have a lot in common. Born in 1949, Gerhäuser completed a degree in German Studies and Political Sciences. In the early 1970s, she moved to Berlin, where she worked as a teacher (cf Mielke 2007). Kawaters was born in 1953 and grew up in Cologne. After studying Sociology in Bochum, Kawaters worked as a journalist for the leftist newspaper Die Tageszeitung (taz) in Bochum (Bornhöft 2001).

Gerhäuser and Kawaters were actively involved in the women’s movement and other political projects. Rather than marrying and settling down, they worked in a range of jobs and moved frequently. In the early

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324 Apart from attracting a considerable amount of media attraction, the trial against Kawaters inspired the Austrian artist Oliver Ressler to produce a 28-minutes long documentary on the ‘Red Zora’. While the director of the film claims that he wanted to provide a space for the ‘personal memories and views’ of Kawaters and a temporary witness, the film does not live up to this ambition.
1980s, Gerhäuser moved to Essen, where she completed training as a radio technician (Bullion 2007). Today, she works as a photographer in Berlin. Kawaters worked in a number of fields ranging from social work to gastronomy. In 1984, she published the detective novel *Zora Zobel findet die Leiche* [*Zora Zobel finds the dead body*] (Kawaters 1984). Two books with same protagonist followed (Kawaters 1986, 2001). In 2005, Kawaters opened a restaurant in Leipzig.

The main evidence in the proceedings against Kawaters and Gerhäuser was the purchase of small travel alarm clocks. By 1986, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was aware that the Red Zora had a preference for alarm clocks of the type *Emes sonochron* as incendiary time fuses (see Image 14 on the following page). In a massive surveillance exercise, prosecuting authorities began to monitor the sale of these clocks throughout Germany. In 1986, employees of the Federal Criminal Police Office confiscated thousands of *Emes sonochron* alarm clocks in watch businesses all over the country, took them apart and engraved code numbers on the back of the clock faces. They then reassembled the alarm clocks and returned them to the shops, which they equipped with video cameras to collect evidence about every purchase of an alarm clock of this type.
On October 15, 1986, Adrienne Gerhäuser fell into the trap. A police camera captured her buying a marked alarm clock that the Red Zora used in a time bomb a few days later. Due to a technical fault, the explosive device at the Institute for Genetic Research in Berlin failed to detonate and was confiscated by police. Not knowing that all clock stores in West Germany were under police surveillance, Gerhäuser purchased another alarm clock in June 1987. This model, too, was used in a bombing but failed to explode (‘Anklage gegen mutmaßliche Linksterroristin’ 2007). Like Gerhäuser, Kawaters was on a list of suspected terrorists that the Federal Criminal Police Office had produced in 1987. During a raid on 18 December, the police found an alarm clock of the type Emes sonochron enclosed in gift wrap in her flat in Bochum (Bornhöft 2001).

On 18 December 1987, police officers searched 33 flats across West Germany, one of which was Corinna Kawater’s flat, as well as the local office of the newspaper taz in Bochum and the office of a small NGO in
Essen (‘Wer ist, bitteschön, die nächste?’ 1988). The aim of the operation was to collect evidence against alleged members of the RC and the RZ. Since they received a timely warning, Gerhäuser and Kawaters and several other suspects narrowly escaped arrest. On that day, the police arrested the journalists Ulla Penselin and Ingrid Strobl. State authorities justified the criminal prosecution of the two women with their interest in ‘anschlagsrelevante’ [attack-related] issues. In the case of Ingrid Strobl, the purchase of an *Emes sonochron* alarm clock was a further cause of suspicion. Based solely on the purchase of this alarm clock and of her political journalistic writing, Strobl was sentenced to five years in prison for supporting a terrorist organisation (‘Erst mal wegschließen’ 1990). Although the judgement was overturned on appeal, Strobl had to spend two and a half years in prison before she was released.

Whilst working on this chapter, I was fortunate enough to talk to the only three women who have publicly declared that they were members of the Red Zora: Corinna Kawaters, Adrienne Gerhäuser and Juliane Balke. In October 2011, I approached Gerhäuser and Kawaters and both signalled interest in my project. First plans to interview them, however, came to nothing. I had falsely assumed that the two women would have an active interest in discussing the history of the Red Zora with a feminist researcher. Whilst being genuinely interested in my project, Gerhäuser

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325 According to the journalist Christoph Villinger, the Red Zora enjoyed sympathy way beyond leftist circles. Apparently, several people – including the wife of a detective in Cologne – tried to warn the members of the Red Zora about the imminent raid (Bornhöft 2001; Villinger 2007). Some say that the state security of the GDR (Stasi) warned Adrienne Gerhäuser’s partner Thomas Kram (see, e.g. Marguier 2007). My research indicates that these allegations are plausible, because the Stasi knew of the raid in advance (Stasi Archive, MfS HA II 25009). None of the documents consulted, however, provided hard and fast evidence that the Stasi warned members of the Red Zora of their imminent arrest. Corinna Kawaters was reporting from an event when colleagues told her that the police were raiding her flat. To avoid arrest, she left the country hurriedly and without any documents or personal property (Bornhöft: 2001).
and Kawaters were reluctant to talk to researchers. Before agreeing to be interviewed, they wanted to see a list of questions. To comply with their request, I sent them a detailed questionnaire via e-mail without having met them personally.

This decision proved to be a major mistake. Before I had established a trusting relationship with Kawaters and Gerhäuser, I confronted them with a number of difficult and personal questions. Effectively, this step discouraged them from working with me. In an attempt to save what could be saved, I stayed in contact with both women and provided them with more information about me, my project and my political background. Fortunately, Gerhäuser agreed a few months later to have an informal conversation, during which we found that we shared a number of political interests and projects. As we got to know each other better, she encouraged her friends to give me a chance to discuss my work with them.

On 17 August 2012, I met Corinna Kawaters, Juliane Balke and Adrienne Gerhäuser in Berlin. Given that the communication had been difficult, I was surprised to find that the three women were warm, friendly from the first minute on and seemed very interested in my project. Kawaters, who had travelled to Berlin from Leipzig on the same morning, brought a box with pieces of evidence to our meeting. Among other items, the box included one of the by now famous alarm clocks for which she and other alleged members of the RC and RZ were arrested.

Over several hours and pots of green tea, Kawaters, Gerhäuser and Balke patiently answered both prepared and spontaneous questions. It quickly became apparent that the three women have different
personalities and did not always agree. Yet none of them dominated the conversation, and they treated each other with respect and affection. Whilst open for difficult and critical questions, they were clearly cautious not to reveal any information that could incriminate themselves or others. We decided not to record the interview, but I was permitted to take notes and pictures. Since so far no member of the RZ has published a memoir, the interview with Gerhäuser, Kawaters and Balke features prominently among the internal sources used in this chapter.

To publicise and justify their activities, the Red Zora released claims of responsibility after most if not all of their attacks. Since the text collection Die Früchte des Zorns includes many of these statements, it constitutes a key resource for my discussion. The texts in Die Früchte des Zorns, however, are usually shortened and edited versions of the original flyers and pamphlets, and several claims of responsibility are missing from the volume altogether. Therefore, the discussion in this chapter wherever possible draws on original documents from archives.

In addition to the many claims of responsibility, the RZ released three detailed position papers. The first of these statements was composed between 1979 and 1981. A slightly altered version of this untitled eight-page long document appeared in the sixth volume of the RC journal Revolutionary Rage under the title Ohnmacht ist die Tarnkappe der Feigheit [Powerlessness Is the Invisibility Cloak of Cowardice]. In 1984, the Red Zora released a second statement to explain their political and ideological position, a text entitled ‘interview with two RZ members’, which they posted to the feminist magazine EMMA. Although the editors made it explicit that they did not share the militant stance of the RZ, they
published the text a few weeks later. In 1993, a part of the group produced the brochure *Milis Tanz auf dem Eis*\(^{326}\), which constitutes the most detailed position paper by the RZ.

To complement and critically evaluate this material, I have collected a range of secondary sources. These include newspaper reports about attacks by the Red Zora and the trials against Gerhäuser and Kawaters as well as articles about and reactions to the group that were published in leftist and feminist magazines. In addition to these publicly available sources, this chapter draws on unpublished government and police reports from the Federal Archives that have not been used by researchers before.

With the arson attacks against Adler, I have chosen to focus in the case study on a moment in the history of the RZ that cannot yet be researched in the Federal Archives but that attracted more media interest than any other campaign by the group. To provide a discussion of events that is as nuanced and balanced as possible, I have conducted interviews with contemporary witnesses and draw on published and unpublished reports by observers of and participants in the broader solidarity campaign.

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\(^{326}\) Literally, the title of the book can be translated as ‘Mili’s dance on the ice’. This translation, however, does not retain the play on words in the German original. ‘Milis Tanz’ resembles ‘Militanz’, which means militancy.
5.3 History

5.3.1 Militant Feminist Group within the RC (1977 – 1984)

Since the RZ is the only organisation among the militant leftist groups in this study that emerged from another militant organisation, its origins are harder to trace than the beginnings of the RAF, MJ2 and RC. To this day, we do not know the name of a single founding member of the group and apart from a few claims of responsibility from the late 1970s and other group statements, there are hardly any sources that provide insights into the subcultural background of the RZ. Notwithstanding this lack of data, it is safe to say that the Red Zora developed within the RC and operated as a part of the militant network for several years. Hence, we cannot discuss the history, ideology and tactics of the group without considering the history of feminism in the RC. Strictly speaking, the history of the RZ did not begin in 1977 but in 1975, since the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice in March 1975 played a constitutive role in its formation. As the previous chapter provides a detailed discussion of the attack and of feminism in the RC, I will only briefly recapitulate both at this point.

The previous chapter discussed how, in the context of the feminist campaign against paragraph 218 (the abortion ban), a group of women in the RC carried out an attack as ‘Women of the Revolutionary Cell’. The women who were part of the group felt personally affected by the decision of the court. Since they considered violence a legitimate and necessary means to assert their demand for free abortions and their opposition to the existing political order, the WoRC decided to plant a bomb at the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe. All women who participated in the
attack identified as feminists, but feminism meant different things to
them.

Feminist militants in the WoRC considered the women’s struggle
important, but it constituted neither their only nor their primary political
concern. Other women who participated in the attack, by contrast,
considered the liberation from patriarchal structures the main priority of
their struggle. In the previous chapter, I have referred to group members
with this stance as militant feminists. Since militant feminists in the RC
did not want to see feminist politics limited to occasional campaigns on
women’s issues, they formed a sub-group that was based on radical
feminist principles. Probably these women were the ‘founding mothers’ of
the RZ.

In April 1977, militant feminists within the RC committed a first
attack under the name ‘Red Zora’. Like the bombing at the Federal Court
of Justice, this attack was directed against an institution that the women
deemed responsible for the insistence on the abortion ban: the
headquarters of the German Medical Association in Cologne. Shortly after
the attack, they released a claim of responsibility that featured, for the
first time in history, the name and logo of the Red Zora (see Image 15 on
following page).

The short statement was characterised by an aggressive tone
similar to that of the claim of responsibility for the attack in Karlsruhe.
The text referred to medics as ‘pigs’ [Schweine] and ‘rapists in white
coats’ [Vergewaltiger in weißen Kittlen] and attacked the German Medical
Association sharply for its insistence on the abortion ban (Die Rote Zora
1977). ‘Worried about losing the lucrative business of illegal abortions,
they [the medics] have successfully opposed the deletion of paragraph 218 with their all-pervading power over the human body'\textsuperscript{327} (ibid.).

A number of references in the claim of responsibility indicate that the authors had been actively involved in the New Women's Movement or had followed feminist campaigns and events in the early 1970s closely. The title of the short text ('Women rise up, and the world will see you')\textsuperscript{328} was a quote from a giant banner at the Federal Women’s Conference [Bundesfrauenkonferenz] in March 1972, the first event where women from towns and cities across West Germany discussed ‘aims and self-conception of the women’s movement’\textsuperscript{329} (Schulz 2002: 158). It was also a

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{327} ‘Besorgt um den Verlust ihrer Einnahmen durch illegale Abtreibungen und mit ihrer Allmacht über den menschlichen Körper, wehren sie sich bis heute erfolgreich gegen eine Streichung des 218.’
  \item\textsuperscript{328} ‘Frauen erhebt euch und die Welt erlebt euch’
  \item\textsuperscript{329} ‘die Ziele und das Selbstverständnis der Frauenbewegung’
\end{itemize}}
quote from a song by ‘the Flying Lesbians’, the first female rock band in West Germany.330

The claim of responsibility indicates that the Red Zora wanted to follow up on previous protest against paragraph 218. The text explicitly mentions a feminist ‘go-in’ during a meeting of the German Medical Association in 1973 that was met with great hostility by participants. 333

The text concluded with a poem. Addressed to the president of the German Medical Association, it noted: ‘No wall will protect you | We’re on lookout | The Red Zora will train hard | To smash your face in | To flambé your car | To dissect your garden | To demolish your villa’332 (ibid.).

One of the few studies on political violence in the FRG that mention the two attacks suggests that the groups behind the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice in 1975 and at the German Medical Association in 1977 were identical (cf Boeden 1989: 71), but there is no clear evidence supporting this claim. In 1984, a member of the Red Zora responded to the question ‘What have you done so far and against which background?’ as follows: ‘The “Women of the Revolutionary Cell” started with a bombing at the Federal Court of Justice in 1974 [sic], because we all wanted the abolition of paragraph 218 and not the easily manipulable

330 In their book Lesbian Peoples. Material for a Dictionary, Monique Wittig and Sande Zweig describe the ‘Flying Lesbians’ as a ‘tribe of companion lovers who, as their name indicates, are wanderers. The Flying Lesbians come from Germany and have companion lovers everywhere. Singers and musicians, they owe their celebrity to the fact that they were the first group of wandering lesbians in the raving that began the Glorious Age’ (Wittig and Zweig 1979: 56).
331 According to an article in the news magazine SPIEGEL, medics told the women to go home and to abort with an iron poker (cf. ‘Abtreibung: Massenmord oder Privatsache?’, (1973) Der Spiegel, 21 May 1973, p. 44).
332 ‘Es schützt Dich keine Mauer | Wir liegen auf der Lauer | Die Roten Zoras werden trainieren | Um auch Dir die Fresse zu polieren | Das Auto flambieren| Den Garten sezieren | Die Villa demolieren’

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On Walpurgis Night 1977, we planted a bomb at the German Medical Association, because it blocked even this reduced reform of the abortion law:\(^{334}\) (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 458).

The prominent error in the statement (the bombing at the Federal Court of Justice happened in 1975 not in 1974) makes it unlikely that the respondent was directly involved in the attack. However, it is worth noting that she mentions the bombing in Karlsruhe, refers to the WoRC and RZ as ‘we all’ and emphasises that both groups had a common goal – the decriminalisation of abortions. Due to the lack of data, it is difficult to prove or challenge any claim about the membership of the WoRC and the founding members of the RZ, but there is good reason to believe that both groups were not completely identical. While my interviewees signalled that they were not in a position to comment on the formative years of the RZ, they were convinced that the founding members of the RZ included not only members of the RC but also feminist activists from outside the group.\(^ {335}\) The radical feminist stance of the RZ distinguished the group from the WoRC and the rest of the RC.

Less than a year after the bombing at the German Medical Association, the Red Zora struck again. On 2 February 1978, members of the group placed an incendiary device and a stink bomb in a sex shop in

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\(^{333}\) The ‘indication model’ [Indikationsmodell] exempted abortions within the first three months from punishment if pregnant women could persuade independent medical experts that their situation was so dreadful that they could not be expected to continue the pregnancy. Chapter 1 and 4 offer a more detailed discussion of the abortion issue.

\(^{334}\) ‘Angefangen haben die Frauen der RZ 1974 mit einem Bombenanschlag auf das Bundesverfassungsgericht in Karlsruhe, weil wir ja alle die Abschaffung des 218 wollten und nicht diese jederzeit manipulierbare Indikationslösung. In der Walpurgisnacht haben wir einen Sprengsatz bei der Bundesärztekammer gezündet, weil von dort aus sich diese reduzierte Abtreibungsreform mit allen Mitteln hintertrieben wurde.’

\(^{335}\) Focus group with three former members of the Red Zora on 17 August 2012.
Koblenz. Three days after the arson attack, a local newspaper received a letter with a claim of responsibility. Here, the perpetrators declared that they wanted to accept no longer that women were reduced to their bodies and degraded to ‘sex-machines’ [Sexmaschinen] at the disposal of male consumers. Like the claim of responsibility for the bombing in Cologne, the statement concluded with a short poem. Once again, the RZ encouraged other women to form their own gangs and to draw on creative and militant forms of protest to assert their dignity and physical autonomy. ‘In their greed for profit, these men have failed to take into account our growing confidence, our will to resist and to track women’s oppression down at every corner, and to fight with creativity. Everything that we have created and that we want to build – love, solidarity and a new culture – can only be maintained and come into being if we destroy what destroys us’. The claim of responsibility concluded with concrete suggestions that ranged from bricking up sex shops to small acts of sabotage, including clogging toilets. Shortly before the attack against the store in Koblenz, the RZ targeted six sex shops in Cologne that belonged to the same chain.

While militant protest against the oppression, objectification and exploitation of women stood at the centre of RZ activities, group members did not want to limit their struggle to ‘women’s issues’. Whilst working on
their own campaigns, they also supported campaigns on issues that did not uniquely affect women, including local protests against growing rents and increased fares on public transport. In 1980, members of the RZ burnt out the car of a lawyer who represented the interests of a landlord in a controversial court case against guest labourers and their families.

In the claim of responsibility, the RZ declared: ‘Even if we have so far mainly focused on forms of oppression that are specific to women, we want to emphasise here again that the women’s struggle is not limited to women’s issues, as that would incapacitate us politically. The women’s struggle is all-encompassing, and it includes the struggle against all forms of oppression, exploitation, destruction and inhumanity’\(^\text{340}\) (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 89).

From 1977 until 1984, the RZ continued to operate as a part of the wider RC network. Members tried to balance campaigns on women’s issues with other ‘general’ campaigns of the RC. Looking back on this period in 1993, however, RZ members explained that they became unhappy with this arrangement:

> When confining ourselves to ‘women’s issues’, we excluded a part of our identity, which we could not yet relate to ‘women’ issues. When working on so-called ‘general’ topics, we disappeared with our identities as women behind the men.

\(^\text{340}\) ‘Wenn wir uns bisher in unseren Aktionen hauptsächlich gegen frauenspezifische Unterdrückung gewehrt haben, bringen wir hiermit noch einmal zum Ausdruck, daß Frauenkampf nicht heißt, sich auf frauenspezifische Bereiche zu beschränken, damit würden wir uns selbst politisch entmündigen. Frauenkampf ist umfassend, beinhaltet den Kampf gegen jede Form von Unterdrückung, Ausbeutung, Zerstörung und Menschenverachtung.’
and behind a political orientation which was embedded in patriarchal structures.341 (Die Rote Zora 1993)

According to the Red Zora, the distinction between ‘women’s issues’ and ‘general topics’ in the RC led to a gendered division of labour in the militant leftist network. They felt that male group members dominated discussions and campaigns on so-called ‘general’ or ‘universal’ topics whilst showing little interest in the campaign against paragraph 218 and other ‘women’s issues’, leaving these topics almost entirely to feminists in the RC. Over the years, the Zoras became increasingly frustrated with the gender politics of the RC as they came to realise that they could not break the distinction between ‘women’s issues’ and ‘general topics’.

5.3.2 Independent Women’s Guerrilla (1984 – 1995)

In December 1993, a group of ‘old’ and ‘new’ Zoras released the brochure Mili’s Tanz auf dem Eis, which provides the first detailed comment on the history of the group. The authors highlight that the separation in 1984 was the result of long and controversial debates between members of the RZ and RC and within the RZ (Die Rote Zora 1993). Apparently, opponents of a separation from the RC cited the following reasons. Firstly, as a part of the wider RC network, the RZ could draw on the knowledge, resources and experiences of their comrades. It seems that at least some members lacked confidence that their small group was strong

341 ‘Bei der Beschränkung auf ‘frauenspezifische’ Themen grenzten wir einen Teil unserer Identität aus, den wir noch nicht so recht als durchaus auch ‘frauenspezifisch’ begreifen konnten. Bei den sog. ‘allgemeinen’ Themen verschwanden wir mit unserer Frauenidentität hinter den Männern bzw. einer patriarchal eingebetteten politischen Ausrichtung.’
enough to create the necessary infrastructure to operate independently from the RC (Die Rote Zora 1993). Secondly, the formative years of the RZ fell in a weak period of the militant Left in West Germany. In the years after the ‘German Autumn’, militant leftist groups in the FRG lost many members and a great deal of support in the radical Left. In this period, some militant feminists felt that they had to stick together with other members of the RC (ibid.). Finally, at least a part of the RZ still saw feminist potential in the RC. Some insisted that there were women in the RC who identified as feminists and wanted to work with these feminist militants (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 459). Others did not want to give up the hope that they could convince their male comrades in the RC of the worth of their radical feminist politics. In a critical remark, the authors of Mili’s Tanz indicate that ‘this illusion was doubtlessly fed by the heterosexual orientation of most Zoras’ (Die Rote Zora 1993).

In contrast to the RAF, the MJ2 and the RC, the members of the Red Zora spoke openly about their personal living conditions, circumstances and sexual orientation. A statement from 1984 suggests that the RZ had both heterosexual and lesbian members. In an interview from 1984, the Red Zora introduced itself to the readership of the feminist magazine EMMA as a group of

[w]omen between 20 and 51, some of us sell our labour on the market of possibilities, some take what we want, others have not yet fallen through the social net. Several women have children, many others don’t. Some women are lesbian, others love men. We shop in terrible supermarkets, we live in ugly

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342 ‘Diese Illusion wurde mit Sicherheit durch die heterosexuelle Orientierung der meisten Roten Zoras genährt’
houses, we enjoy going for walks or to the cinema, to the theatre, to the discothèque. We like having parties and enjoy doing nothing.343 *(Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 457)*

Contrary to women in the RAF, the members of the Red Zora presented themselves not as uncompromising militants but as ‘normal’ women with ordinary lives. Most group members, Adrienne Gerhäuser and Corinna Kawaters included, had no children; although the EMMA interview suggests that at least a few women in the RZ were mothers. It would be extremely interesting to explore how the militant feminist group dealt with children, but the existing data unfortunately does not allow a nuanced discussion of motherhood in the RZ.

In addition to ‘never-ending demoralising arguments’ within the group and with comrades in the RC (Die Rote Zora 1993), different political priorities played an important role in the separation of the RC and the RZ. In the early 1980s, the RC focused increasingly on migration. The Red Zora, however, wanted to work on campaigns against population control, the pharmaceutical industry and genetic engineering (‘Rauchzeichen: Ein Rückblick auf 20 Jahre RZ’ 2001: 11). Adrienne Gerhäuser aptly described the separation from the RC as a ‘processual disentanglement’344.

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343 ‘Frauen zwischen 20 und 51, einige von uns verkaufen ihre Arbeitskraft auf dem Markt der Möglichkeiten, einige nehmen sich, was sie brauchen, andere sind noch nicht durchs soziale Netz gefallen. Einige haben Kinder, viele andere nicht. Manche Frauen sind lesbisch, andere lieben Männer. Wir kaufen in ekelhaften Supermärkten, wir wohnen in hässlichen Häusern, wir gehen gerne spazieren oder ins Kino, ins Theater, die Disco, wir feiern Feste, wir pflegen das Nichtstun.’

344 ‘sich prozesshaft entwickelnde Loslösung’ (source: E-Mail from Adrienne Gerhäuser, 1 December 2012).
During and even after the separation of the two groups, members of the RC and RZ maintained close relationships and worked jointly on campaigns on several occasions. Gerhäuser’s long-term relationship with a male founding member of the RC is just one example of the close ties between members of the RC and RZ (Falck 2007). In 1994, members of both groups worked jointly on a campaign against companies that they considered to be profiteers of the asylum system in the FRG. Other examples of collaborations between the two groups include, as mentioned previously, campaigns against fare increases in public transport and rent rises.

While the separation from the RC never led to a complete break, members of the Red Zora emphasise that the autonomy they gained was of vital importance for their personal development and their political struggle.

A joint organisational structure with men does not only imply that we spend a considerable part of our energy to assert our positions as women/lesbians in continual arguments, it also confines us to a discursive field that is created by men, and it orientates us again and again towards male norms, which we have often deeply internalised. They block our thinking and our development, and they are a bar to the development of a revolutionary-feminist perspective. (Die Rote Zora 1993)

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345 With the term women/lesbians, the Red Zora used an expression that was common in women’s groups in West Germany. The term was used to draw attention to the fact that the position of women and lesbians was related yet not always identical (Rote Zora 1993).

346 ‘Gemeinsame Organisierung mit Männern bindet nicht nur unsere Energien in der ständigen Auseinandersetzung um die Behauptung von FrauenLesbenpositionen, sondern sie bindet uns auch in von Männern gesetzte Diskussionsprozesse ein, bringt uns immer wieder auf das Gleis der Orientierung an männlichen Normen, die wir selbst oft tief verinnerlicht haben. Sie blockiert uns damit in unserem Denken und unserer”
To develop this perspective, the Red Zora orientated itself increasingly towards the New Women’s Movement. The following sections illustrate that the group developed an approach to violence that incorporated several central principles of the New Women’s Movement.

In the first years as an autonomous women’s group, the Red Zora reached a peak of activity and increased recognition of its activities. With bombings at research centres and industrial sites in the fields of genetic engineering and population control in 1985 and 1986, and a series of attacks against the German clothing chain ‘Adler’ in autumn 1987, the Red Zora took up central topics in the women’s movement. In combination with other expressions of solidarity, these attacks forced Adler to accept the demands of striking women workers in their factory in South Korea (discussed further in the case study in this chapter).

Due to the large police operation in December 1987, the RZ had little time to enjoy their success. As highlighted previously, the raids led to two arrests and forced several group members underground. Even if the arrests sparked a broad solidarity campaign, the authors of Mili’s Tanz make no secret of the fact that the events in December 1987 caused lasting damage to the RZ. The situation for the remaining group was aggravated further by political developments in the following years including reunification, the Iraq Wars, and the decline of the movement against genetic engineering and reproductive technologies (ibid.). In the
1990s, things went quiet around the RZ. While the group has never declared its own dissolution, it carried out its last attack in 1995.

5.4 Ideology

Retrospectively, members of the Red Zora described the theory and practice of the militant Left and of the New Women’s Movement in West Germany as two ‘different poles’ in their thinking (Die Rote Zora 1993). Both had emerged from the student and protest movement in the 1960s and shared a number of theoretical influences (e.g. Marxism, Anarchism and existentialism), guiding principles (e.g. ‘the personal is political’, anti-fascism, anti-authoritarianism, solidarity with people in the Third World, etc.) and common aims (e.g. the liberation of oppressed groups). Despite these similarities, the New Women’s Movement and the militant Left in West Germany set different priorities and soon evolved in very different directions. One constitutive difference was the prevailing approach to violence (for a more detailed discussion of the two movements, see Chapter 1). The Red Zora drew on, adapted and challenged the politics of the militant Left and the New Women’s Movement by trying to develop a distinctively feminist approach to violence (Die Rote Zora 1993).

As the case study in this chapter illustrates, this approach met with strong criticism in both movements, although for different reasons. While many groups in the women’s movement rejected the militant stance of the Red Zora, the radical feminist politics of the group isolated it in the RC and in the radical Left. Throughout the years, it remained a subject of controversial debate within the group whether the RZ was above all a
women’s guerrilla that identified with ‘the anti-imperialist liberation movements and [other] guerrilla groups’ or a part of the women’s movement ‘with all the constraints this implied with regard to logistic means and possibilities’ (ibid). The RZ never provided a definitive answer to this question. The group tried to maintain a dialogue with both movements and oscillated between the two poles in its ideology, at times leaning more towards one or the other, but never fully embracing or rejecting either. While this tension sparked internal discord and external criticism, the militant feminists believe that it also strengthened the social cohesion in the RZ and helped them to develop as a group (ibid).

The politics of the militant Left in West Germany constituted the first pole in the RZ ideology. As highlighted previously, the RZ emerged from the RC, and the ideology, structure and tactics of this and other militant groups profoundly shaped the politics of the RZ. Similarly to the RC, the RZ constituted a decentralised network of small local groups that had no official leaders. Members of both groups went underground only if no other option was available to them. Like their comrades in the RC, the members of the RZ were ‘Feierabendterroristen’ [after work terrorists] who kept their jobs and tried to stay involved in local projects and social movements even after they had joined the armed struggle. Both the RC and the RZ followed the principle of ‘massification’; i.e. they explicitly encouraged other people to adopt and adapt their approach and to form their own groups. The RC called for the formation of many Revolutionary

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347 “die sich als Teil der antiimperialistischen Befreiungsbewegungen und Guerillagruppen versteht”
348 “mit allen Beschränkungen, die das z.B. im Hinblick auf die logistischen Mittel und Möglichkeiten mit sich brachte”
Cells, (‘Create many revolutionary cells’\textsuperscript{349}); the Red Zora sought to encourage women and girls to form their own feminist gangs (‘Form your own gangs’\textsuperscript{350}).

Like other militant leftist groups in West Germany, the members of the Red Zora were fundamentally opposed to the existing political order, and they considered the use of violence imperative to overcome oppression and exploitation on a local and global scale. Yet the militant feminists made the criticism that ‘the decision to join an armed struggle is often mystified as a revolutionary act per se. To understand this form of struggle as particularly radical without considering the subject matter, however, contributes to a mystification of violence that does not break with the dominant definition of violence’\textsuperscript{351} (Die Rote Zora 1993). The Red Zora opposed the prevailing notion of violence, because it did not tackle ‘the structural, subtle and direct violence that constitutes and reinforces patriarchy’\textsuperscript{352} (ibid.). As long as the militant Left does not challenge the prevailing concept of violence, argued the Red Zora, it would try to seize power within the existing patriarchal structures rather than helping to overcome them.

In its first theory paper, the group refuted the assumption that the oppression of women was a ‘side-contradiction’, prevalent in Leninist-Marxist groups at the time. Statements by the RAF and MJ2 illustrate that they, too, saw the women’s issue as a ‘side contradiction’ to be solved

\textsuperscript{349} ‘Schafft viele Revolutionäre Zellen’
\textsuperscript{350} ‘Gründet eure eigenen Banden’
\textsuperscript{351} ‘[die] Entscheidung für ‘bewaffneten Kampf’ wird oft als revolutionäres Handeln per se mystifiziert. Die Kampfform an sich als besonders radikal zu sehen, losgelöst vom Inhalt, arbeitet einer Mystifizierung von Gewalt zu, die mit der herrschenden Definition von Gewalt nicht bricht.’
\textsuperscript{352} ‘die strukturelle, subtile und direkte Gewalt, die das Patriarchat ausmacht und stützt’
in the course of a broader social revolt. The Red Zora, by contrast, held that patriarchy was older than capitalism, and the liberation of women was a prerequisite for liberation from all forms of oppression.\textsuperscript{353} According to the RZ, the existing political order was patriarchal because ‘women are oppressed and confronted with violence everywhere and at all times – in both open and hidden ways’.\textsuperscript{354}

The group cited the exploitation of female labour in the Third World and a rise in domestic violence and in rapes in countries that formally promoted gender equality as proof of a worldwide oppression of women. Whilst acknowledging that not only women but also men would suffer from the dominance, violence and oppression in patriarchal structures (e.g. because of their age, ethnic background or social class), they insisted that this suffering was not comparable to the systematic use of violence against women.\textsuperscript{355}

Inspired by critical contributions of African-American and Jewish feminists, and by postcolonial and queer theory, the Red Zora later refined and revised their notion of patriarchal oppression. Early claims of responsibility illustrate that the RZ tried to take into account that the situation of women differed based on their class background, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality and a number of other factors. The concept of a universal oppression as women, however, pushed these differences into the background in favour of a shared experience of patriarchal violence.

\textsuperscript{353} FMT, D.051, ‘Protest ist, wenn...', 1970-1979, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{354} ‘Frauen werden in einer patriarchalen Gesellschaft immer und überall unterdrückt und mit der Gewalt konfrontiert, offen oder verschleiert’ (source: ibid., p. 4).
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid.
On a number of occasions, the Zoras tried to support women whom they deemed to be victims of patriarchal structures (e.g. trafficked women and sex workers) without enquiring how these women felt about their situations. In a self-critical comment, the group acknowledged later ‘[w]e assumed that women all over the globe ultimately faced the same kind of sexist violence’\(^{356}\) (Die Rote Zora 1993). Based on this assumption, the Zoras saw sex workers from the Third World initially as ‘double victims’ (of imperialism and of sexism) rather than as acting agents. Later, the group reconsidered this position recognising that ‘many decide – even though under an existential pressure – that they “prefer” a life as a sex worker or wife in Germany to the struggles for survival or hard graft in factories in their own countries (which allows them to send urgently needed money back home)’\(^{357}\) (ibid.).

The politics of the New Women’s Movement constituted the second pole in the ideology of the RZ. In the eyes of the Red Zora, the women’s movement provided critical insights into patriarchal structures and practical ideas to challenge them. In 1993, some of the RZ explained that they identified with the women’s movement because it ‘it made personal oppression the starting point of its political practice. It broke the distinction between the private and the political. The personal was political, and the political became personal’\(^{358}\).

\(^{356}\) ‘Frauen sahen wir weltweit (letztendlich gleicher) sexistischer Gewalt ausgesetzt.’

\(^{357}\) ‘Damit übergingen wir die betroffenen Frauen. Viele von ihnen treffen - wenn auch aufgrund einer Zwangssituation - die Entscheidung, die Arbeit in der Sex-industrie oder als Ehefrau hier den Existenzkämpfen oder der Abschütteleri in den Weltmarktfabriken in ihren Ländern ‘vorzuziehen’ (z.B. können sie dadurch auch dringend benötigtes Geld nachhause schicken).’

\(^{358}\) ‘Die Frauenbewegung machte die persönliche Unterdrückungssituation zum Ausgangspunkt ihrer politischen Praxis. Die Trennung zwischen Privat und Politik.'
‘An explosive, revolutionary force’, the group further argued, ‘lay in the consciousness of a direct link between the abolition of personal suffering and the necessity of social change’\(^{359}\). However, the Red Zora criticised the Women’s Movement in West Germany for not realising its revolutionary potential. Rather than defending themselves against violence, women – feminists included – tended to avoid confrontations. They accepted patriarchal structures and male authority and sought refuge in victimhood.\(^{360}\) Whilst acknowledging that victimhood was a survival technique for many women, the Red Zora criticised that it made them complicit with the structures and individuals that exploited them.

According to the Red Zora, the law offered no protection from sexist violence and abuse. In the interview with the feminist magazine \textit{EMMA} (discussed above), they claimed that ‘[w]hen husbands hit and rape their wives, it doesn’t matter.\(^{361}\) When women traffickers sell our sisters from the Third World to honest men from Germany, this is legal. When women have to do monotonous jobs that ruin their health for a living wage, this is legal’\(^{362}\) (\textit{Die Früchte des Zorns} 1993: 460). According to the Red Zora, women could only improve their situation if they broke with laws and social conventions. Inspired by the children’s book \textit{Die Rote

\(^{359}\) ‘Revolutionäre Sprengkraft lag in dem Bewußtsein der direkten Verbindung zwischen der Abschaffung des persönlichen Leidens und der Notwendigkeit einer sozialen Umwälzung’ (source: ibid.).

\(^{360}\) Ibid., p. 4.

\(^{361}\) Until 1997, spousal rape was not understood as rape in the legal sense.

\(^{362}\) ‘wenn Ehemänner ihre Frauen schlagen und vergewaltigen, dann ist das legal. Wenn Frauenhändler unsere SchWestern aus der 3. Welt kaufen und an deutsche Biedermänner weiterverkaufen, dann ist das legal. Wenn Frauen für ein Existenzminimum eintönigste Arbeit machen müssen und dabei ihre Gesundheit ruinieren, dann ist das legal.’
Zora und ihre Bande\textsuperscript{363} [The Red Zora and her Gang], the RZ sought to encourage women and girls to form gangs to fight back against the many forms of violence and abuse that they experienced in their everyday lives:

The Red Zora and her gang – that’s the cheeky girl who took from the rich to give to the poor. To form gangs, to engage in illegal activities, it seems, is still a male privilege. But it is women and girls who should free themselves from private and political chains and become bandits for our freedom, our dignity and our humanity. Law, justice and order are invariably against us, even if we have fought hard and achieved a few rights [...]. The radical women’s struggle cannot be law-abiding.\textsuperscript{364} (ibid.)

Whilst explicitly encouraging women to break the law, the group insisted that it ‘did not see a hierarchy in different forms of actions. Handing out flyers, squatting, spraying graffiti, gluing locks, throwing stones, planting bombs and setting fire – all was right, if it was coordinated well’\textsuperscript{365} (Die Rote Zora 1993).

Although the RZ called for a diversity of tactics, it clearly placed special emphasis on militant resistance. In their first position paper, the group argued that it could be liberating and empowering for women to

\textsuperscript{363} Kurt Kläber’s novel Die Rote Zora und ihre Bande, which he published under the pseudonym Kurt Held in 1941, provided an example of female leadership as the Red Zora envisaged it: the leading character was unconventional, wild and subversive, but also responsible and caring.
\textsuperscript{364} ‘Die rote Zora und ihre Bande’ – das ist die wilde Göre, die die Reichen bestiehlt, um’s den Armen zu geben. Und Banden bilden, sich außerhalb der Gesetze zu bewegen, das scheint bis heute ein männliches Vorrecht zu sein. Dabei müssten doch gerade die tausend privaten und politischen Fesseln, mit denen wir als Mädchen und Frauen kaputtgeschnürt werden, uns massenhaft zu ‘Banditinnen’ für unsere Freiheit, unsere Würde, unser Menschsein machen. Gesetze, Recht und Ordnung sind grundsätzlich gegen uns, selbst wenn wir uns ein paar Rechte schwer erkämpft haben und täglich neu erkämpfen müssen. Radikaler Frauenkampf und Gesetzesstreue - das geht nicht zusammen!’
\textsuperscript{365} ‘Wir sahen keine Hierarchie in verschiedenen Aktionsformen. Flugblatt verteilen, Besetzungen, Sprühaktionen, Schlösser verkleben, Steine schmeißen, Spreng- und Brandsätze legen – alles war wichtig, wenn es zusammengriff’
fight against male perpetrators of violence and authorities who abused their power.

Personally, we found it tremendously liberating to break with the feminine peaceableness that was imposed on us and to take a conscious decision for violent means in our politics. We experienced that with our actions, we could break through fear, powerlessness and resignation, and we wanted to pass this on to other women/lesbians.\(^{366}\) (Die Rote Zora 1993)

Drawing on their own experiences, the members of the Red Zora promoted a kind of feminist ‘counter-violence’\(^{367}\). In the context of the group’s ideological framework, this notion has a double meaning. On the one hand, it implies recourse to violence for defensive rather than aggressive reasons. On the other hand, it signals the way in which the RZ promoted a concept of violence that stood in opposition to the prevailing notions of violence.

For at least two reasons, this feminist conception of violence differed considerably from the violence promoted by the RAF, MJ2 and RC. Firstly, in line with the feminist focus on personal experiences of abuse and oppression, it was intended to be a defence mechanism against everyday violence. The Red Zora did not try to assassinate enemies or to attack military targets. Rather the group promoted small-scale attacks

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\(^{366}\) ‘Wir selbst empfanden das Verlassen der uns zudiktierten weiblichen Friedfertigkeit bzw. die bewußte Entscheidung für gewalttätige Mittel in unserer Politik als ungeheuer befreiend. Wir erlebten, daß wir mit unseren Aktionen Angst, Ohnmacht und Resignation durchbrechen konnten, und wollten dies anderen FrauenLesben weiter vermitteln.’

\(^{367}\) The members of the Red Zora do not define ‘counter-violence’ or specify the origins of the term, but it is likely that they have adopted the concept from Herbert Marcuse (particularly relevant in this context are Marcuse’s book *One-Dimensional Man* and his essay ‘Repressive Violence’).
against property that did not cause serious harm to people. This approach and the tactics that resulted from it differed sharply from that of the guerrilla and the urban guerrilla (for a detailed discussion of both, see: Münkler 2006, Fischer 2006). It came closer to the small acts of resistance that James C. Scott described in his study *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. By weapons of the weak, Scott means

the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interests from them. Most forms of this struggle stop well short of outright collective defiance. Here I have in mind the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on. These Brechtian – or Schweikian – forms of class struggle have certain features in common. They require little or no coordination or planning; they make use of implicit understandings and informal networks; they often represent a form of individual self-help; they typically avoid any direct, symbolic confrontation with authority. (Scott 1985: xvi)

Scott’s notion of everyday resistance is comparable to the RZ concept of feminist counter-violence in that both refer to the struggle of a relatively powerless group making use of ordinary weapons lying close to hand rather than sophisticated technology. Unfortunately, Scott’s otherwise brilliant study neglects the role of women in daily forms of resistance. Another difference is that the Red Zora by no means called for protest with ‘little or no coordination or planning’. Quite the contrary, the group argued that militant feminists had to plan their attacks carefully and
responsibly. This brings me to a second difference between the RZ and the RAF, MJ2 and RC.

Unlike other militant leftist groups in West Germany, the Red Zora made it a priority not to hurt or kill people in their attacks. My interview with three former group members indicates that this approach was as much the result of personal ethics as of the life-affirming politics of the Women’s Movement. Contrary to the RAF, MJ2 and RC, the RZ did not use guns at any time. Before committing arson attacks and bombings, the group carefully evaluated possible risks. ‘The very possibility of endangering lives’, declared two group members in 1984, ‘forces us to proceed particularly responsibly’ (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 462).

The women stated further

It would be a paradox if the people who fight against a system that defines the value of human life solely by its usability become in the course of their struggle as cynical and brutal as this system. We have abandoned numerous plans because we could not eliminate the risk that innocent people get hurt. Some companies know all too well why they choose lively neighbourhoods. They count on our morality when establishing themselves in apartment buildings to protect their property.

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368 Focus group with three former members of the Red Zora on 17 August 2012.
369 ‘Gerade die Möglichkeit, Leben zu gefährden zwingt uns zu besonderer Verantwortlichkeit’
370 ‘Es wäre doch paradox, gegen ein System zu kämpfen, dem menschliches Leben nur so viel wert ist, wie es verwertbar ist und im Zuge dessen ebenso zynisch, ebenso brutal zu werden, wie die Verhältnisse sind. Es gibt -zig Aktionen, die wir wieder verworfen haben, weil wir die Gefährdung Unbeteiligter nicht hätten ausschließen können. Manche Firmen wissen sehr genau, warum sie sich mit Vorliebe in belebten Häusern einnisten. Sie spekulierten auf unsere Moral, wenn sie sich in Mehrfamilienhäusern niederlassen, um dadurch ihr Eigentum zu schützen’
Even if they did not make it explicit, it is clear that the militant feminists distanced themselves with this statement from other militant leftist groups in West Germany. By the time of the release of the quoted interview, the RC had killed one person, the MJ2 was responsible for the death of two people, and the RAF had shot and blown up several people. Among the four groups at the centre of this study, the Red Zora remained the only one that did not kill anyone. As the following section illustrates, there is only one known incident in the history of the RZ when the group directly attacked a person.

5.5 Activities

Between 1977 and 1988, the RZ claimed responsibility for 45 arson attacks and bombings, most of which took place in the 1980s (cf Deckwerth 2007), and a few more followed in the 1990s. The last attack by the Red Zora took place in 1995 – a point in time when it had become quiet around militant leftist groups in West Germany. In 1993, a part of the group provided an overview of their activities. Similar to the RC in 1975 (see Chapter 4), the RZ structured this overview according to central themes. Contrary to their comrades in the RC, the RZ used this opportunity not only to contextualise but also to critically examine previous attacks. In their discussion, the authors of Mili’s Tanz focused on campaigns on four central themes: sex shops, trafficking in women, issues around population control, reproductive technologies and genetic engineering, and Adler/Flair Fashion (Die Rote Zora 1993). While the Red Zora adopted a range of other issues, (e.g. the protest against
paragraph 218, high rents and fare increases in public transport), the discussion in *Mili’s Tanz* provides a good starting point for an overview of the activities of the RZ.

The Red Zora made their debut in 1977 with a bombing at the German Medical Association in Cologne. Like the courthouse bombing by the Women of the Revolutionary Cell in 1975 (see case study in Chapter 4), the attack in Cologne involved high explosives and targeted a central institution. While the bombing at the German Medical Association was still strongly influenced by the tactics of the RC, later attacks came closer to their ideal of feminist counter-violence. Unlike central institutions such as the Federal Court of Justice or the headquarters of the German Medical Association, sex shops and sexual entertainment could be found in all major cities and in many towns.

For the attack against a sex shop in Koblenz in February 1978, the RZ used basic homemade weapons. According to a police report, the incendiary device was composed of pegs, a cigarette box and a number of other components all of which were available in supermarkets and do-it-yourself stores.371 The small fire was quickly under control, but it caused 300 DM of property damage. A few days before the attack in Koblenz, the Red Zora targeted six stores in Cologne that belonged to the same chain of sex shops. According to a local newspaper, these attacks caused damage worth 200,000 DM (Elendt 1978). By using everyday weapons and by choosing local targets, the Red Zora hoped to encourage other women to form their own gangs and to carry out similar attacks.

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With its campaign against sex shops and pornography, the Red Zora sided with anti-porn feminists in the ‘sex wars’ of the late 1970s and early 1980s.\footnote{372} Feminists with this stance denounced the porn and sex industry, because they reasoned that it played a central role in cultures that degraded and objectified women. An article published a few weeks after the attacks indicates that other feminists shared this stance. The March issue of the feminist magazine EMMA included parts of the claim of responsibility for the attacks in Cologne. A little cartoon figure next to the text, which had a striking similarity to the chief editor Alice Schwarzer, said: ‘Help! – I feel overwhelmed with clandestine joy’ (see Image 16).\footnote{373}

\footnote{372} An in-depth discussion of the feminist sex wars goes beyond the scope of this chapter and has been provided by other scholars (see, e.g. Duggan and Hunter 2006).

\footnote{373} The expression of ‘clandestine joy’ hints at an incident in 1977, when the author of an article in a student magazine in Göttingen expressed ‘clandestine joy’ about the assassination of the attorney general of Germany Siegfried Buback by members of the Red Army Faction.
Retrospectively, members of the RZ admitted that their rage against sex shops was at least in part the result of an ‘unquestioned bourgeois-Christian’ [bürgerlich-christliche] distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ sexuality (Die Rote Zora 1993). In 1993, the women declared that there were still good reasons to attack sex shops, but they confessed that their protest in the 1970s had failed to consider the views of women who worked in the sex industry and not paid enough attention to less visible forms of sexism and abuse (Die Rote Zora 1993).

In the early 1980s, the Red Zora organised a series of attacks against women traffickers and their property. The militant feminists attacked the cars and houses of several men who ‘sold’ women from Asian, Latin American and African countries to German men. While the original texts from this period are missing, I found a copy of one claim of responsibility in the Stasi archive in Berlin. The statement includes the only proof of violence against people in the history of the Red Zora. They forced a man, who was – according to them – a notorious trafficker in women from Hamburg, to pose naked with a sign around his neck which read, mimicking the style of his own newspaper advertisements, ‘woman trafficker – sweet, affectionate – to be used at any time, with toad-prick’374. The claim of responsibility was signed ‘raging/racing Zora’375 and featured a photograph of the scene. The militant feminist pamphlet concluded as follows: ‘We will put up resistance against all woman

374 ‘Frauenhändler - süß, anschmiegsam - jederzeit zu gebrauchen, mit Krötenpimmel’  
375 ‘rasende Zora’
traffickers, rapists, and shitty machos and against the imperialist, misogynist system for as long as we can think and feel!!\textsuperscript{376}

In 1983, the Red Zora planted a bomb at the Philippine consulate in Bonn. They accused the Philippine government and other corrupt countries in the Third World of profiting from sex tourism, trafficking and prostitution. With their attacks against the Philippine consulate and their German business partners, the RZ sought to protest against the exploitation and oppression of Philippine women. ‘The possibility to advertise and sell Philippine women here like commodities’, argued the Zoras, ‘is an aggravated expression of social power relationships, and of violent and exploitative relations between men and women’\textsuperscript{377} (\textit{Die Früchte des Zorns: 467}).

According to the Red Zora, the exploitation of women in the Philippines and in other Third World countries constituted an offence against all women, including themselves. They declared that they wanted to express their solidarity with Philippine women, ‘because, as women, we feel offended by this practice’\textsuperscript{378} (ibid). As mentioned previously, members of Red Zora critically examined their position in the early 1990s. Then, group members acknowledged that their notion of sexism as a primary and universal form of oppression did not take account of their privileged position as white German women (Rote Zora 1993).

\textsuperscript{376}’Wir werden Widerstand leisten gegen alle Frauenhändler, Vergewaltiger, Scheißmacker und gegen das imperialistische, frauenfeindliche System, solange wir denken und fühlen können!!’ (source: Stasi Archiv Berlin, MfS HA XXII 5216/8, p. 288-289).

\textsuperscript{377} ‘Die Möglichkeit, hier philippinische Frauen wie Handelsware anzupreisen und zu verkaufen ist verschärfter Ausdruck der gesellschaftlichen Machtverhältnisse, der Gewalt- und Ausbeutungsverhältnisse zwischen Männern und Frauen’

\textsuperscript{378}’weil wir uns als Frauen durch diese Praxis angegriffen fühlen’
In addition to trafficking in women, in the 1980s the Red Zora adopted other central topics of the women’s movement: issues around population control, reproductive technologies and genetic engineering. In March 1982, members of the Red Zora set fire to the headquarters of the multinational pharmaceutical company Schering. In the claim of responsibility, the group accused Schering and other companies in this industry of ‘continuing the tradition that Nazis had begun with experiments on women in concentration camps’ (Die Früchte des Zorns: 465).

Further attacks followed in the mid-1980s. In 1985, the group planted bombs at the Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research in Cologne and the technology park in Heidelberg. In 1986, the RZ attacked the Institute for Human Genetics in Münster and the Society for Biotechnological Research in Braunschweig. In the claim of responsibility for the bombing in Cologne, members of the RZ argued that the plants being bred at the Max Planck Institute for Plant Research would not eradicate hunger and poverty. ‘They breed political plants here with the effect that a few multinational companies will control the agricultural economy around the globe and will increase their profits’ (Die Früchte des Zorns 1993: 473-474). While the RZ considered it a success that the militant protest caused disruption and unsettled investors, the authors of Mili’s Tanz admitted that the campaign had failed to provide an informed feminist critique of these technologies (Die Rote Zora 1993).

379 ‘setzen die Tradition fort, die die Nazis mit ihren Versuchen an Frauen in den KZ begonnen haben’
380 ‘Hier werden politische Pflanzen gezüchtet, deren Folge die weltweite Kontrolle der Agrarwirtschaft durch einige multinationale Konzerne und deren Profitsteigerung ist’
In 1987, the Red Zora committed a series of attacks against the German clothing chain ‘Adler’ to support women workers who were producing clothes for the company in South Korea. The campaign against Adler was beyond doubt the most spectacular and successful one in the history of the Red Zora. ‘What remains’, declared the group five years later, ‘is the experience that in joint struggles we can develop a strength that can limit the ruling powers’. The women acknowledged that the success of the campaign against Adler was the result of a combination of legal and illegal protest and was above all the victory of courageous workers in South Korea.

While international solidarity remained a central theme for the RZ, the group could not repeat the success of the Adler campaign in the early 1990s. On 24 July 1995, the RZ carried out its last attack: a bombing at a shipyard in Hamburg, where a German company produced boats for the Turkish military. In the claim for responsibility, the RZ called for ‘practical solidarity with the resistance of women in Kurdistan and of Kurdish women here’. Since the series of attacks against Adler illustrates better than any other campaign what the Red Zora meant by international solidarity and feminist counter-violence, the case study in the following section provides a detailed analysis of this militant protest against the clothing chain.

381 ‘Was bleibt, ist die Erfahrung, daß wir in gemeinsamen Kämpfen Stärke entwickeln können, an der die herrschende Macht Grenzen findet’
382 ‘praktische Solidarität mit dem Widerstand der Frauen in Kurdistan und der kurdischen Migrantinnen hier’
5.6 Case Study: The Arson Attacks Against the Clothing Chain ‘Adler’ in August 1987

5.6.1 The Context

On 4 May 1986, the Korean Women’s Group in West Berlin received a letter that caused great concern among its members. It included a report in which trade unionists described the poor working conditions in the garment factory Flair Fashion, in Iri, South Korea (a Free Trade Zone 250 km from Seoul) (Stolle 1986). The factory produced clothes that the German company Adler sold at cheap prices to customers in West Germany and other European countries. In 1988, the company ran 38 stores with a selling space of more than 100,000 m² and aimed for a turnover of 1,000,000 DM (Kosczy et al. 1988: 35). Founded in 1959, Adler had initially produced its entire stock in Germany, but now outsourced a growing part of its production to Asia. In 1978, Adler opened a garment factory in Iri to benefit from the relatively low labour costs and the financial benefits of the South Korean Free Trade Zone. By 1986, 60 to 80% of the clothes that Adler sold in its European stores were ‘made in Korea’ (Stolle 1986).

The company’s investment in South Korea paid off for Adler within months. In 1986 alone, the net profit of the Flair Fashion factory was 19 times higher than the capital stock (Kosczy et al. 1988: 68). According to the German management, Flair Fashion was a ‘model factory’ (Adler in Kosczy et al. 1988: 74). They claimed that wages were 10 to 15% higher than in Japanese and American-owned factories in the Free Trade Zone.

383 By August 2012, the number of local stores had grown to 166. According to a recent report, the turnover in the first six months 2012 was 263.2 Million Euro, cf. Adler Modemarkte AG (2012) Bericht über das erste Halbjahr 2012.
and that Flair Fashion provided free accommodation to 300 employees, plus a tennis court and a range of other facilities (Stolle 1986). Trade unionists, however, criticised the working conditions at Flair Fashion as ‘inhumane’.

In their letter to the Korean Women’s Group in Berlin, workers reported that they were expected to do at least one hour of overtime per day whilst receiving salaries below the minimum wage (Kosczy et al. 1988: 61). The management constantly monitored the employees and punished them for mistakes. According to the authors of the letter, many workers could meet the required output only by foregoing breaks and exhausting themselves beyond their limits (ibid.). They added that the German management at Flair Fashion treated the Korean workers with disrespect (ibid.).

The authors of the letter were particularly concerned about the situation of female employees at Flair Fashion. Since the 1960s, women’s involvement in the South Korean labour market had grown constantly. By the late 1980s, it had come close to 50% (Sung 2003: 345). For the most part, women worked as unskilled labourers in low paid occupations. In 1987, ‘the majority of women workers (56.1%) were employed in only three out of 27 manufacturing industries [wearing apparel, textiles and electronics], all key export industries’ (Seguino 1997: 106). Women constituted more than 70% of the workers at South Korean clothing manufacturers (ibid.). At Flair Fashion, the ratio of female employees was even higher than in other garment factories in South Korea: 85% of 1600 employees were women (Schwarz 1987: 16).
For the most part, female employees at Flair Fashion were unskilled workers of 17 to 25 years of age. As in other garment factories, women’s wages at Flair Fashion were considerably lower than those of their male colleagues. On average, female workers earned 40 to 50% less than men in the same positions (Kosczy et al. 1988: 6). And, unlike male employees, not all women workers were insured against industrial accidents: female employees could claim compensation from the Korean insurance system only if they were under 25. At this age, they were expected to leave the workforce to dedicate themselves fully to marriage and motherhood (Kosczy et al. 1988: 2).

According to Jai Sin Pak, a member of the Korean Women’s Group in Berlin, Confucian gender norms imposed a strongly subordinate position on women in Korea under which girls and unmarried women were under the authority of male relatives, while married women must submit to their husbands (ibid: 24). A recent study comes to a similar conclusion: ‘Korea has maintained a patriarchal system of gender relations for more than two millennia of recorded history. These rigid gender roles are mainly based on Confucian teachings, which accord a public status to men and a domestic role to women’ (Sung 2003: 346).

The increasing participation of women in the Korean labour market did not, at least initially, challenge traditional gender norms. In fact, Adler and other foreign investors benefited from the low wages and docile demeanour of female workers. Fürchtegott Adler, the head of Flair Fashion, openly admitted this fact in an internal publication in 1984: ‘The rapid rise of the ADLER company’, declared Adler, ‘was possible only
because of the black-haired, almond-eyed Korean women. He added that, to his regret, he lost most of his employees at the age of 25, because the Flair Fashion ‘girls’ wanted to ‘spoil their men and dedicate themselves fully to family and household’ (Kosczy et al. 1988: 72).

Compounding the discrimination experienced by female employees at Flair Fashion as women in the South Korean labour market, trade unionists claimed that sexual assault by the management was commonplace at the factory. ‘When a German manager likes a worker’, explained the authors of the letter to the Korean women in Berlin, ‘she has to meet his desires, or she risks being moved to a worse position or being fired’ (ibid.: 61). The letter-writers did not refer to concrete cases, but they left no doubt that a sexual relationship with a German manager was the only way for women to be promoted to overseer or shift leader (ibid.). The workers saw no way to solve their problems internally, as the German management prohibited general assemblies and refused to discuss employment issues with democratically elected trade union activists. In view of these circumstances, a group of unionists decided to go public. In their letter to the Korean Women’s Group in West Berlin, the women described the problems at Flair Fashion and appealed for ‘sisterly help’ from Germany (ibid.).

The plea for help from South Korea sparked a thriving solidarity campaign in West Germany that involved groups across the political spectrum. The Korean Women’s Group in Berlin and ‘Terre des Femmes’
activists were the first to respond, with a public relations campaign that mobilised a range of other groups including Christian organisations, radical leftist groups, trade unions and Third World activists. According to one observer, the motives and political backgrounds of the actors involved varied considerably, but the decentralised and non-hierarchical nature of the campaign allowed them to express solidarity with the Korean workers in their own ways (Dischereit in Kosczy et al. 1988: 56). Since this protest campaign provides the background for the attacks by the Red Zora, I want to discuss it briefly before analysing the attacks themselves.

To offer a detailed account of the solidarity campaign for the Flair Fashion workers and of the arson attacks by the Red Zora, this case study draws on a detailed report from TdF, comments by activists and news coverage. I could locate a claim of responsibility and other relevant sources in the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. In addition, I have collected data in interviews with Christa Stolle from Terre des Femmes, the feminist activist Christa Wichterich, a representative of the Korean Women’s Group in Berlin, and three former members of the Red Zora.

Shortly after receiving the alarming report from South Korea in May 1986, members of the Korean Women’s Group translated the letter and sent it to women’s groups and human rights organisations in

387 Alarmed by a report about ‘honour killings’ in the Middle-East, a group of women in Hamburg founded ‘Terre des Femmes’ in 1981 to support ‘girls and women through raising public awareness, international networking, campaigning, individual personal assistance and the promotion of self-help projects abroad’ (Terre des Femmes 2012). To this day, the German based NGO seeks to ‘ensure that women and girls around the world are able to lead self-determined lives as well as enjoying equal and inalienable rights’ (ibid.). Local groups all over Germany support TdF on a voluntary basis and contribute to the periodical ‘Frauensolidarität’ [women’s solidarity].
Germany. In October 1986, members of a local TdF group in Tübingen wrote to the works council of Adler employees in Germany asking them to comment on the allegations in the Korean report. They received no answer. On 25 November, a member of TdF Tübingen called the company to discuss the report. She and the head of Flair Fashion Fürchtegott Adler agreed to meet to discuss the situation in Iri.

On 5 December, members of TdF and the Korean Women’s Group met with Adler and other representatives of Flair Fashion. During the meeting, Adler management insisted that Flair Fashion was a model factory and emphatically denied all allegations. In the eyes of the women who participated in the conference, the only positive outcome of the three-hour meeting was that the Adler management agreed to allow a visit by an independent fact-finding committee to the garment factory in Iri (ibid.: 43). Two weeks after the conference, Christa Stolle, a member of TdF Tübingen, published an article in the newspaper taz with the telling title ‘Fair Game [Freiwild] in the Free Trade Zone’ (Stolle 1986). The following months saw a couple of critical reports on the situation of workers at Flair Fashion, but the solidarity campaign did not gather momentum until news emerged that the conflict between workers and management at Flair Fashion had escalated.

During the annual wage negotiations with the management in March 1987, trade unionists demanded a 19.5% wage increase and improved working conditions. In the course of the negotiations, the union lowered the demand to 16.5%. Without consulting other union members, the head of the union (who had not been democratically elected) signed a contract with the management on 1 April for a 12.5% raise. The union
membership, however, did not accept this agreement. Within a few days, they collected more than 1000 signatures in the factory to protest against the decision, but the management refused to reconsider the agreement (Kosczy et al. 1988: 68).

On 7 April, an internal ‘reward and punishment committee’ [Belohnungs- und Bestrafungskommission] decided to fire nine women and three men whom they considered ‘ringleaders’ in the protest (Dischereit 1988: 25). Eight hundred workers went on strike to express solidarity with their 12 colleagues and to underline their demand for a 16.5% wage increase. According to a journalist in Iri, 90% of the participants in the peaceful protest were women between 17 and 25 years of age (Messner 1987). Police and security forces ended the strike with violence and arrested 10 participants (ibid.). On 1 May 1987, a Flair Fashion employee tried to kill herself in a bathroom at the factory in Iri. In her farewell note, the woman stated that she wanted to commit suicide to draw attention to the industrial action of the Flair Fashion workers (Wichterich 1987c).

When news of the attempted suicide and the strike at Flair Fashion reached West Germany, the solidarity campaign in Germany entered a new stage. In April 1987, the Korean Women’s Group, Christian organisations, TdF groups and other organisations staged protests in front of Adler shops throughout West Germany. The actors involved wanted to create awareness of the industrial dispute at Flair Fashion and to mobilise consumers and employees in German Adler stores to express solidarity with the Korean workers. In flyers, the groups called on Adler customers to rethink their attitude towards fashion and consumption, to
write protest letters to the Adler management, to discuss outsourcing of production to Third World countries in unions and political organisations, and to sign a petition against the company (Kosczy et al. 1988: 66). As the protest campaign gathered momentum, it attracted national media attention, and several national newspapers and TV programmes reported critically about the working conditions at Flair Fashion.388

For the most part, the protests against Adler proceeded peacefully. However, there were some exceptions. During one of the first demonstrations at the Adler headquarters in Haibach, one of the co-founders of the company and his wife assaulted TdF-activists and attacked a journalist (‘Unter Adlern’ 1987). In May 1987, several participants of a demonstration in Sankt Georgen broke into an Adler store and were arrested by the police (Kosczy et al. 1988: 52). In late July, armed police forces attacked protesters who had blocked the entrance of an Adler store in Bremen (‘Blockade für Südkoreanerinnen’ 1987).

On 21 June, members of the Red Zora planted a bomb at the Adler headquarters in Haibach. The failed bombing marked the beginning of a series of attacks against Adler premises in Germany. In August, the RZ claimed responsibility for nine arson attacks against Adler stores in the North-west of the country (making ten attacks in total). In September 1987, a then unknown women’s group from West Berlin carried out an eleventh attack against Adler. The newspaper taz reported that, a few weeks later, a twelfth attack was thwarted by pure chance (‘Adler-

388 Examples include an article in the Frankfurter Rundschau on 25 May, and a report in the news magazine WISO on 20 July 1987.
Anschlag per Feuerzeug’ 1987). The militant protest against Adler sparked heated debates within and beyond the solidarity campaign. The following two sections provide an overview of the militant feminist attacks against Adler and of responses by other women involved in the solidarity campaign.

5.6.2 The Attack

The series of attacks against Adler in 1987 began with a failed attempt. The RZ planted a self-built bomb at the headquarters of the company in Haibach. As the device failed to detonate, the attack received hardly any attention in the German press (Kosczy et al. 1988: 46). The RZ militants, however, had already published a claim of responsibility, a three page long statement in which they presented the attack as an expression of solidarity with the Flair Fashion workers. The group declared: ‘In solidarity with the fighting women at Adler in South Korea, we planted a bomb at the Adler headquarters in Haibach [...] to destroy a part of their administrative machine’389. This statement was not included in the RC/RZ text collection Die Früchte des Zorns and is to this day not publicly available. As it provides a more detailed explanation of the Red Zora’s thinking than texts from later actions against Adler, I want to briefly summarise its content here.

The claim of responsibility opens by describing the situation of women workers at Flair Fashion. Drawing on information provided by the

TdF activist Christa Stolle in her article in the newspaper taz, the RZ presented the conditions in the factory as ‘wage slavery based on sexist and racist oppression’ (ibid.). In the second part, the authors discussed how globalisation in the garment industry and other sectors of the economy affected women in Germany as workers and consumers. Whilst acknowledging that a growing number of women with little or no income slipped below the poverty threshold, the RZ warned them not to accept consumption ‘as a surrogate for [a better] life’. ‘Despite the fact that living conditions in [Western] cities worsen, we mustn’t forget a central point: our privileges, including that of consumption, are based on the exploitation, use and destruction of people in the Third World’.

A few weeks after the failed bombing in Haibach, the Red Zora struck again. On the night of Saturday 15 August the group tried to set fire to Adler stores in Hamburg, Bremen, Oldenburg, Isernhagen, Holzwickende, Kassel, Neuss, Aachen and Frankfurt (see Image 17 on the following page). Initial crime scene investigations led the police to conclude that the arson attacks had been carefully planned. Police authorities suspected that incendiary devices had been installed in the nine shops during the opening hours on the day of the attack (‘Brandanschläge auf acht Textilkonzern-Filialen’ 1987). The attackers escaped unnoticed. Most probably, they looked like any other customers. A former group member explained in an interview with me that she tried to dress decently and inconspicuously to blend in with the environment in

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390 ‘Die Lohnsklaverei basiert auf sexistischer und rassistischer Ausbeutung’
which she acted and to make it difficult for others to describe her to the police. She tried to dress like a ‘housewife’ when she performed tasks for the RZ.\footnote{Source: E-Mail to the author from 22 October 2012.}

Using electric time fuses, the RZ could synchronise the arson attacks and delay the ignition of the incendiary compositions for several hours. Between 8.30 and 9.30 pm, fires broke out in eight of the nine shops (ibid.). For unknown reasons, the two incendiary devices in the store in Aachen failed to catch fire. Due to the large sales floor in Adler stores, it was easy to place but almost impossible to find incendiary devices. Only when the perpetrators informed a pastor about their location could special forces detect and destroy the incendiary devices in Aachen (‘Flambieren, demolieren’ 1987). An extensive search for traces in

\textit{Image 17: Attacked Adler Stores}

and around the store revealed that the homemade incendiary devices in cigarette boxes had a similar composition to those used in the arson attack at the sex store in Koblenz (ibid.). Apparently, the incendiary devices in other stores were also homemade but constructed in a slightly different way. The two incendiary devices in coat-pockets in a store in Frankfurt reminded a journalist of ‘Molotov cocktails from the era of the department store arsonists in 1968’393 (ibid.). Incendiary devices in other stores included Emes sonochron alarm clocks as time fuses (ibid.).

During a press conference a few days after the attack, police officials announced that the ‘Red Zora’ had claimed responsibility for the attacks. The police had to admit, however, that they knew little about the structure or strength of this organisation (‘Terror soll nicht mehr männliches Vorrecht sein’ 1987). Due to the geographic focus of the arson attacks and the use of electric time fuses, the police could not exclude the possibility that a small number of perpetrators had executed all attacks. The fires and the sprinkler systems that they activated caused substantial property damage without hurting any person. According to the Adler management, the loss of the company amounted to 30 to 35 million DM (‘Die Rote Zora’ bezichtigt sich der Anschläge auf Adler’ 1987).

On 17 August, the German Press Agency and the editorial teams of several newspapers received a letter with a claim of responsibility entitled ‘Eagle flambéed’394 (‘Flambieren, demolieren’ 1987). Of all recipients, only the editors of the newspaper taz chose to publish the full text. As in the claim of responsibility for the failed bombing in June 1987, the statement

\[393 \text{‘Mollies aus der Ära der Kaufhausbrandstifter anno 1968’}\]
\[394 \text{Translated into English, the German word Adler means eagle.}\]
called on Adler management to meet the demands of the striking women in Iri. This time, the RZ kept it short. In a couple of paragraphs, the group explained their motives, underlined the demands of the Flair Fashion workers and sent ‘fiery greetings’ to the Korean women. Whilst highlighting the importance of information events and other non-violent actions against Adler, the perpetrators presented their arson attacks as a form of solidarity with the Flair Fashion workers and as a complement to the predominantly peaceful protest campaign in West Germany (‘Flammende Grüße bei Adler’ 1987).

The claim of responsibility indicates that the Red Zora understood the struggle of the Korean workers and their struggle in Germany as different yet related in three ways. Firstly, as white German women, they felt that they had benefited too long from exploitation in the Third World and wanted to support the local struggle for better working and living conditions at Flair Fashion. Secondly, they saw the protest in Iri as an ‘encouragement’ for women in Germany to stand up against oppression and sexual abuse. Thirdly, the Red Zora understood the struggle of the Flair Fashion workers and expressions of solidarity by German women as contributions to a global struggle for women’s liberation. The claim of responsibility illustrates this position:

We want to incorporate the living conditions and struggles there [i.e. the Third World] into our resistance here [i.e. Germany] – whether women work for starvation wages, live off prostitution, manage the daily struggle for survival in the slums – when they strike, occupy land, collectively appropriate food, fight in liberation movements... Our hope for liberation here must be based on global liberation as women, we must become part of a joint struggle. The success of
While the quoted passage does not explicitly mention the idea of solidarity, it illustrates the central role that this concept played in the politics of the Red Zora. In this and in later statements, the group emphasised that the foundation for solidarity among women had to be a commitment to a joint struggle against a sexist, racist and imperialist system, not a shared identity as helpless victims of patriarchal oppression.

This understanding of solidarity corresponds with bell hooks’ definition of feminism that I introduced in Chapter 1. By trying to account for the diversity among women and for the situatedness of their knowledge and struggle in a self-critical and open manner, the Red Zora came closer to the feminist ‘politics of location’ than any other group in the centre of this study. Following Braidotti, I have defined the politics of location in Chapter 1 as ‘cartographies of power that rest on a form of self-criticism, a critical genealogical self-narrative; they are relational and outside directed’ (Braidotti 2011: 16). According to the definitions used in this thesis, the Red Zora can therefore be understood as a feminist organisation.

395 'In unserem Widerstand hier wollen wir die Lebensbedingungen und Kämpfe der Frauen dort miteinbeziehen – ob die Frauen für Hungerlöhne arbeiten, von Prostitution leben, in den Slums den täglichen Überlebenskampf organisieren – wenn sie streiken, Land besetzen, sich kollektive Lebensmittel aneignen, in Befreiungsbewegungen kämpfen... Unsere Hoffnung auf Befreiung hier kann sich nur auf die weltweite Befreiung als Frauen begründen, darauf, dass wir Teile eines gemeinsamen Kampfes werden. Der Erfolg von Frauenkämpfen dort ist auch eine Ermüdigung für alle Frauen hier, die sich gegen Demütigung, Unterdrückung und Ausbeutung wehren'
Solidarity was a central concept in the politics of the RZ because it allowed the group to relate its struggle in Germany to the protests of the workers in South Korea, and relate both to a global fight for the liberation of women as women. In the claim of responsibility, the RZ did not define ‘solidarity’ or explain what they meant by the expression ‘liberation as women’. But looking back in 1993, group members declared that the Adler campaign epitomised what international solidarity meant to them, namely: ‘directly supporting women from other continents in their struggle, changing power structures in favour of them and us’ (Die Rote Zora 1993).

During an interview with three former members of the Red Zora, I asked them to explain why they had decided to express solidarity with the workers in Iri. ‘Empathy’ [Empathie] and ‘concern’ [Betroffenheit] were the first words that came up when the women tried to describe what they felt when they heard of the situation of the Korean women. During the campaign against Adler, the members of the Red Zora were more cautious than previously not to impose or project their views and their struggles onto the women they wanted to support. Retrospectively, a part of the RZ explained that the solidarity campaign in 1987 helped them to understand that their demands as white women in West Germany differed from those of women in other geo-political positions. ‘We need a radical openness and willingness to discuss thoroughly in which social conditions particular demands are made. This also means that our own

396 ‘Frauen aus anderen Kontinenten direkt in ihrem Kampf zu unterstützen, Machtverschiebungen zu ihren und unseren Gunsten bewirken’
397 Focus group with three former members of the Red Zora on 17 August 2012.
standards need to be revealed, discussed and are subject to change’ (Die Rote Zora 1993).

As in earlier years, the Red Zora argued that women all over the world had to fight together against structural violence and personal abuse to overcome patriarchal structures. In the words of a former member of the RZ, ‘women’s liberation is possible only when all women have liberated themselves’. Other women in the radical Left and in the radical feminist spectrum shared this position. Drawing on a definition by the feminist lecturer and activist Barbara Smith, Trinh T. Minh-ha defined feminism in 1987 as ‘the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women...Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism but merely female self-aggrandizement’ (Minh-ha 1987: 12). While they left it to other women to decide what means they wanted to use to fight against patriarchal structures, the members of the Red Zora considered it part of their liberation to express solidarity with other women in the form of militant protest. As we shall see, this approach provoked controversial debates among participants in the solidarity campaign.
5.6.3 Public Responses

Due to its spectacular nature, the series of attacks against Adler attracted more media attention than any other activities of the Red Zora.\textsuperscript{400} In the days after the fires, many national and numerous local newspapers reported on the attacks. It is interesting to note in what terms journalists described the perpetrators. Drawing on information provided by the Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation, authors introduced the Red Zora as a feminist ‘sub-group’ [Untergruppe] (‘Terror soll nicht mehr männliches Vorrecht sein’ 1987) or ‘female offshoot’ [weiblicher Ableger] (‘Ermittlungen gegen Rote Zora’ 1986) of the Revolutionary Cells.

Most articles presented the RZ as a ‘feminist terror group’\textsuperscript{401} that consisted exclusively of women (see, e.g. ‘Rote Zora: Anschläge bei Adler verübt’ 1987, ‘Terror soll nicht mehr männliches Vorrecht sein’ 1987, “‘Rote Zora’ bekennt sich zu Brandanschlägen’ 1987). Unlike women in the RAF in the early 1970s, the members of the ‘Red Zora’ were not belittled with the infantilising label ‘terror girls’ but presented as ‘angry ladies’\textsuperscript{402} and frustrated feminists (‘Flambieren, demolieren’ 1987). ‘[W]ith the large-scale action against Adler’, suggested the news magazine Der Spiegel, ‘the angry ladies in the RC might have wanted to prove to ignorant men in their own circle what they were capable of’\textsuperscript{403} (‘Flambieren, demolieren’ 1987).

\textsuperscript{400} Yet, it should be added that this attention did not come close to the public interest with which attacks by the Red Army Faction (see Chapter 2) or the kidnapping of the politician Peter Lorenz by the Movement of June 2 (see Chapter 3) were met.
\textsuperscript{401} ‘feministische Terrorgruppe’
\textsuperscript{402} ‘radikale Damen’/ ‘wütende Damen’
\textsuperscript{403} ‘mit der Großaktion bei Adler hätten die wütenden Damen der RZ es auch den ignoranten Männern in den eigenen Zirkeln einmal zeigen wollen’
More than a few authors suggested that the RZ had attacked Adler out of frustration with machismo within the Revolutionary Cells. The author of the *Spiegel* article, for instance, declared that the members of the Red Zora felt ‘oppressed’ by male comrades in the RC. ‘Is this’, added the journalist polemically, ‘why they played with fire at the Adler stores?’ (ibid.).\(^{404}\) The author here both reduced the militants’ motives to a perceived oppression by male comrades, and belittled the arson attacks of the Red Zora as ‘playing with fire’\(^{405}\) (ibid.).

While the group certainly did not attack Adler to impress their male comrades or get outdo them, it is true that the months prior to the arson attacks had seen a heated debate about sexism in the radical Left. In 1987, the first comprehensive collection of RC statements circulated in leftist circles in West Germany but, apart from one contribution to the RC magazine *Revolutionary Rage*, the book included no texts by the RZ. On 21 July 1987, the newspaper *taz* documented an appeal by a group of men and women who distributed legal and illegal leftist literature in the Ruhr area. The authors declared: ‘We refuse to distribute this masculinist book […], because the book reinforces a one-sided, thus false, misogynist historiography of the Revolutionary Cells and the Red Zora for years to come, and it declares the guerrilla a male preserve’\(^{406}\) (‘Geschlechterkampf im Untergrund’ 1987).

\(^{404}\) ‘Die Frauen der ‘Roten Zora’ fühlen sich von den Männern der ‘Revolutionären Zellen’ unterdrückt. Zündelten sie deshalb bei Adler?’

\(^{405}\) The author repeatedly uses minimizing verbs like ‘zündeln’ and ‘kokeln’ to describe the actions of the Red Zora.

\(^{406}\) ‘Wir lehnen es […] ab, dieses männliche Buch zu verbreiten […], weil das Buch eine einseitige, damit falsche, frauenfeindliche Geschichtsschreibung über die Revolutionären Zellen und die Rote Zora auf Jahre hinaus festschreibt und Guerilla zur Männersache erklärt’
The question of whether the attacks against Adler were part of a ‘battle of the sexes’ [Geschlechterkampf] in the militant Left, as the *taz* article indicated, was of little interest to most participants in the solidarity campaign with the Flair Fashion workers. Here, the militant protest provoked heated debate on a different question: did the attacks benefit or harm the campaign? In a press release from 17 August, the executive board of TdF expressed its indignation about the militant protest against Adler and ‘strongly condemned’ the attacks. The women declared: ‘Actions of that kind discredit the non-violent work of a women’s rights organisation that has been in close contact with women workers at the Adler factory Flair Fashion in South Korea’ (Kosczy et al. 1988: 91).

The TdF women were concerned that the militant protest of the Red Zora could lead to an association of their organisation and the Women’s Movement as a whole with violence. Moreover, they expressed the fear that the attacks deflected attention from the situation of the Flair Fashion workers. The Korean Women’s Group in Germany took a similar stance. In early September, the organisation declared in a public statement: in the ‘interest of effective and far-reaching educational work [...] we distance ourselves decisively from any recourse to violence to enforce the objectives of unions’ (ibid.: 95).

At least initially, the response of the Adler management appeared to show that these concerns were well founded. On 17 August, representatives of the company declared that they had decided to stop  

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407 ‘Derartige Aktionen diskreditieren die gewaltfreie Arbeit einer Frauenrechorganisation, die seit einem Jahr in engem Kontakt mit den Arbeiterinnen im Adler-Produktionswerk Flair-Fashion in Südkorea steht’
408 ‘Im Interesse einer wirksamen und möglichst weitreichenden Aufklärung [...] distanzieren wir uns eindeutig von jeglicher gewalttätiger Form der Durchsetzung gewerkschaftlicher Zielsetzungen’
production in South Korea to ensure safety and health of their customers
and clients in Germany (‘Rote Zora: Anschläge bei Adler verübt’ 1987). On
21 August, a German manager of Flair Fashion, together with a
representative of the Adler works council visited TdF Tübingen. They
claimed that the TdF-campaign created ‘fertile ground for manifestations
of violence’409 (Kosczy et al. 1988: 48). The Adler workers refused further
contact with the women’s group because they suspected ‘terrorists’ among
its members (ibid.).

In a speech on 18 August, Fürchegott Adler informed the Flair
Fashion employees that a ‘terrorist organisation’ [Terrororganisation] had
attacked German Adler stores to enforce the re-employment of the
dismissed trade unionists (ibid.: 93). He claimed that the trade unionists
who had demanded a wage increase of 16.5% were radical students under
the control of European radicals (ibid.). Adler declared that the company
would continue to produce in Iri if – and only if – the employees
vehemently opposed an infiltration of the factory by the dismissed
workers. As a sign of gratitude for their cooperation, the management
promised a 20% wage increase to the Flair Fashion workers (Lukoschat
1987).

As news of the wage increase did not reach Germany for another
month, the protests in West Germany continued as if nothing had
happened. On 9 September 1987, representatives of German Church
groups and unions organised a press conference in Frankfurt. In a joint
statement, the actors involved urged Adler once again to meet the
demands of the workers and to reemploy the dismissed employees

409 ‘Den Boden fruchtbar gemacht für Gewaltakte’
On 11 September, the ‘Amazons’, an until then unknown group of militant feminists, followed the example of the ‘Red Zora’ and set fire to an Adler store in Berlin (‘Neuer Anschlag auf eine Filiale von Adler in Berlin’ 1987).

Like the Red Zora, the ‘Amazons’ used slow-burning incendiary devices to minimise the risk of injury to members of staff or customers (Die Amazonen 1988). They, too, framed their attack against Adler as a contribution to the predominantly peaceful solidarity campaign. The Adler management then responded to the 11th attack against its premises with a surprising turn-around. A representative of the company declared that it had ‘succeeded to violence’ 410 (‘Neuer Anschlag auf eine Filiale von Adler in Berlin’ 1987). Representatives of the company promised to accept the wage increase, to reemploy the dismissed union activists and to meet other demands of their employees in order to prevent further attacks (ibid.).

This unexpected decision by the Adler management provoked a range of responses in the solidarity campaign, from celebratory enthusiasm to grave concern. Terre des Femmes welcomed the concessions from Adler, but at the same time published an open letter criticising the company for making its decision for the wrong reasons. ‘You are obviously not willing to recognise fundamental rights of male and female workers as such, but you ultimately give in to violence. Does Adler want to establish a precedent [...]?’ 411 (Kosczy et al: 97).

410 The management declared: ‘Adler beugt sich der Gewalt’.
411 ‘Sie sind offenbar nicht bereit, Grundrechte der Arbeiter/innen als solche anzuerkennen, sondern beugen sich letztlich nur der Gewalt. Will Adler damit einen Präzedenzfall schaffen [...]?’
An article by the feminist activist and scholar Christa Wichterich argued that the militant protest against Adler imperilled the success of the broader solidarity campaign. ‘Are ten fires enough to create international solidarity among women?’ she asked rhetorically (Wichterich 1987b). Whilst endorsing tactical diversity, she criticised ‘voluntaristic actions that jeopardise other forms of resistance’ (Wichterich 1987a). According to her, notwithstanding the apparent victory, the arson attacks by the ‘Red Zora’ and the ‘Amazons’ posed a risk to the broader aims of the solidarity campaign. ‘This firework’, claimed Wichterich, ‘was a disservice to the attempt to use a single protest campaign to create a triangle of solidarity between workers in the Third World, and consumers and workers here. Reason enough to discuss these fiery tactics in the women’s movement’ (Wichterich 1987b).

With a letter to the editors of taz, a radical women’s group from Reutlingen made a critical contribution to this debate. They argued that Wichterich’s article and the TdF-statement were ‘naïve’ and divisive. While the authors of the letter agreed that militant protest alone did not make a solidarity campaign, they argued that the Red Zora had made an important contribution to the campaign’s overall success. According to this group, the arson attacks had caused economic harm to Adler and increased the pressure on the company. ‘Radical resistance on all levels is

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412 ‘Machen zehn Feuer schon eine internationale Solidarität von Frauen?’
413 ‘voluntaristische Aktionen, die andere Widerstandsaktionen gefährden’
necessary if we want to put our ideas of a non-hierarchical, non-sexist, non-racist society into practice’

Addressing Wichterich and other feminists, they wrote: ‘It is up to you what forms of resistance you choose and how you put your ideas about change in this society into practice’ (ibid.). But they found it unacceptable that participants in the solidarity campaign ‘serve dominant forces’ by ‘denouncing some forms of resistance in the same vocabulary as the State Protection Office (“fem. terror group”)’. Other women in the radical Left expressed similar views. One week after Christa Wichterich published her article, ‘a group of angry women’ [Gruppe zorniger Frauen] openly expressed their enthusiasm at Adler’s climb-down in a small advertisement in the same newspaper, congratulating the ‘Red Zora and her sisters’ for ‘the brilliant action’ [Glanzstück] (‘Zora’ 1987). The RZ was thus clearly not the only group in the Women’s Movement and in the radical Left who believed that women should be free to choose militant tactics in expressing their solidarity with the Korean workers and supporting their struggle.

In an interview in January 1988, Christa Stolle and Ute Kosczy from TdF and Jai Sin Pak from the Korean Women’s Group in West Berlin reported back from South Korea about recent developments at Flair Fashion. They acknowledged that, by and large, the management...
had met the demands of the workers. By the time of their visit, Flair Fashion had now been placed under Korean management, a change that was a mixed blessing in the eyes of the employees. The interviewees acknowledged that the communication in the factory had improved but they expressed concerns that the oppression of workers would continue in equally extreme, albeit more subtle, forms (Boschmann 1988).

Whilst defending the exclusively non-violent politics of her organisation, Christa Stolle put the TdF response to the arson attacks into perspective. ‘In hindsight, it was rash and unnecessary [that we distanced ourselves] in this manner. At the time, we thought that the media would attack us and label us as terrorists’418 (ibid.). Stolle concluded with a message from the Flair Fashion employees to the Red Zora. According to Stolle, the ‘fiery greetings’ had not reached their destination, and the workers knew of the attacks only because the Flair Fashion management had mentioned them in an address to the employees (ibid.). The women said that they wanted to be informed about future attacks by the actors involved not by the management (ibid.).

5.6.4 Discussion: Reflective and Proactive Solidarity

‘Solidarity’ was a central concept in the German support campaign for the Flair Fashion workers. The various actors involved shared a common goal, i.e. they wanted the Adler management to meet the demands of the Flair Fashion workers. But there were considerable differences in their

418 ‘Aus heutiger Sicht war das sicher vorschnell und in dieser Form auch nicht nötig, aber damals dachten wir, die Medien fallen über uns her und stempeln uns auch als Terroristen ab’
broader political backgrounds, beliefs and motivations, which shaped their very different understandings of the nature of the solidarity campaign.

The members of the Korean Women’s Group in West Berlin declared their solidarity with the Flair Fashion employees because as working women from Korea they identified directly with the plight of the striking workers. Korean church authorities and the Catholic organisation Justitia et Pax felt moved to act as mediators between the parties in conflict out of ‘Christian compassion’ (many of the employees were members of Christian communities or unions). Union activists in West Germany criticised Adler for its ‘anti-union’ politics. TdF, the ‘Red Zora’, the ‘Amazons’ and other feminist groups responded to the call for ‘sisterly help’, moved by an idea of feminist solidarity beyond borders.

A central concept in feminist discussions in the US and in Europe in the 1980s (see, e.g. Morgan 1985), the notion of global sisterhood has become the subject of growing criticism since (see, e.g. Hewitt 1985, hooks 2000, Mohanty 2003, Henry 2004). The feminist author and theorist bell hooks traced the concept of universal sisterhood back to a problematic idea of common oppression, evoked mainly by ‘bourgeois white women, both liberal and radical in perspective’ (hooks 2000: 43).

Chandra Talpade Mohanty makes a similar criticism to hooks. She argues that the notion of sisterhood ‘erases material and ideological power differences within and among groups of women, especially between First and Third World women’ (Mohanty 2003: 116). While Mohanty addresses an important point, the solidarity campaign for the Korean workers shows that an idea of global sisterhood does not
necessarily erase differences among women. The Flair Fashion employees, the Korean Women’s Group in Germany and white German feminists who participated in the solidarity campaign acknowledged their different economic and geopolitical positions. Despite and because of these differences, they related to each other as sisters.

Unlike Mohanty, hooks does not dismiss the notion of sisterhood. Instead, she encourages women to understand it as the achievement of a common and constant struggle rather than taking it as a given. According to hooks, the feminist struggle against sexism can only succeed if it is also a fight against racism and classism (hooks 2000: 63). Women, according to hooks, should bond ‘on the basis of our political commitment to a feminist movement that aims to end sexist oppression’ (ibid.: 47). Mohanty’s notion of solidarity is similar to hooks’ conception of sisterhood. She suggests thinking of solidarity

in terms of mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities. Rather than assuming an enforced commonality of oppression, the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together. (Mohanty 2003: 7)

TdF and the Red Zora both shared this understanding of solidarity. The two groups understood the protest in Iri and expressions of solidarity in Germany as contributions to a broader struggle to overcome a worldwide system of patriarchal structures, although they drew on very different tactics to express their solidarity with the Korean workers.
As we have seen, the Red Zora and other militant feminists expressed the position that violent protest was a possible, or even necessary, means for women to express solidarity across borders. The members of TdF, however, drew and draw exclusively on non-violent means to express solidarity with other women. In a brochure, representatives of the organisation described the approach and aims of TdF as follows:

With publications, media releases, information stands, newsletters and events, TdF wants to create broad public awareness, investigate and constantly inform on discrimination, exploitation, abuse and persecution of women. The aim of this work is to change the consciousness of individuals and of society at large and to respect women as capable and equal members of a society. Ultimately, this aims at abolishing all patriarchal ways of life.419 (Terre des Femmes 2010: 5)

Among other reasons, members of TdF and other radical and liberal feminists in West Germany condemned the arson attacks against Adler because they felt that the RZ had not tried to discuss their tactics with the workers in Iri and with other participants in the solidarity campaign. Christa Wichterich, for instance, explained that she had criticised the arson attacks because she believed that a constant dialogue with women in the Third World provides the only way for women in Western countries

419 'Durch eigene Publikationen, Mitteilungen an die Medien, Informationsstände, Rundschreiben und Veranstaltungen will TERRE DES FEMMES die breite Öffentlichkeit sensibilisieren, aufklären und kontinuierlich informieren über Diskriminierung, Ausbeutung, Mißhandlung und Verfolgung von Frauen. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, das Bewusstsein der Gesellschaft wie auch des Einzelnen zu ändern und Frauen als fähige, gleichwertige Mitglieder einer Gesellschaft zu achten. Das zielt letztlich auf die Abschaffung sämtlicher patriarchaler Lebensformen ab.'
to find out what their ‘sisters’ in the other continents want, and what women ‘here’ can do to support them.\textsuperscript{420}

Drawing on Jodi Dean’s book \textit{Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism after Identity Politics}, the dialogic approach to solidarity that TdF and other feminist critics of the RZ endorsed can be understood as a form of ‘reflective solidarity’. According to Dean, ‘reflective solidarity refers to a mutual expectation of a responsible orientation to relationship’ (Dean 1996: 29). Following Jürgen Habermas, Dean argues that conventional forms of solidarity are often based on an externally established ‘we’ – a collective identity that distinguishes the actors involved from other groups (e.g. workers, Christians, or members of a political party). Reflective solidarity does not assume a collective identity. Rather it seeks to create an ‘internally designated “we”’ based on ‘ties created by dissent’, which requires a constant communicative effort by all actors involved (ibid.). Elsewhere, she explains what this means

\begin{quote}
The communicative and performative qualities of the internally designated ‘we’ are important for feminist solidarity because they remind us that we don’t have to understand ourselves as ‘us’ against ‘them’. We can recognize each other as belonging to ‘us’. Through language we establish a relationship with each other, creating a common space. With our queries we challenge each other, letting our space, for a time, be one of negotiation. This internally designated, communicative ‘we’ stresses the possibility of feminist coalitional practices in which the strength of the bond connecting us stems from our mutual recognition of each other instead of from our exclusion of someone else. (Dean 1998: 15)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{420} Source: E-Mail by Christa Wichterich to the author from 6 September 2012.
Drawing on Dean, Mohanty argues that feminist solidarity has to be the product of a constant dialogue and a political struggle that accounts for similarities and differences among women. Reflective solidarity, in other words, begins with communication and involves constant negotiations. Expressions of solidarity by individual actors are based on and constrained by the consensus reached in a communicative process involving all parties. Simply put, reflective solidarity implies that individual actions have to follow from collective dialogue. From the very beginning of their involvement in the solidarity campaign, TdF focused on creating and maintaining such a dialogue and tried to involve employers, employees, activists and other groups in South Korea and in Germany.

In the claims of responsibility, the Red Zora explicitly endorsed a diversity of tactics and recognised the work of TdF and other participants in the solidarity campaign. Yet the militant feminists did not share the notion of reflective solidarity that TdF and other women promoted. They endorsed a different approach to solidarity that I want to refer to as ‘proactive’. In general terms, a proactive approach can be defined as ‘creating or controlling a situation rather than just responding to it after it has happened’ (Oxford Dictionary). Proactivity is a key concept in organisational psychology and in education studies, where it refers to self-initiated behaviour by actors who actively seek to shape and change social environments rather than waiting for things to happen.

In the eyes of the Red Zora a call for sisterly help, and the reality of living and working conditions in South Korea and in Germany, were reasons enough to act. While reflective solidarity is based on the assumption that expressions of solidarity follow from dialogue, proactive
solidarity implies that expressions of solidarity can create and amplify dialogue. According to one former member, the Red Zora understood the attacks against Adler as a form of ‘armed propaganda’ [bewaffnete Propaganda] for the cause of the Korean workers, acts with which the RZ wanted to spark a discussion in Germany and to intensify the dialogue between women in the FRG and in South Korea.421

Whilst the attacks certainly boosted the media interest in the Adler case, the discussion in this chapter has shown that participants in the solidarity campaign were divided on the question of whether this attention was favourable for the Korean workers. The Red Zora expressed the position that every woman should freely decide how to express her solidarity with the Flair Fashion workers whether in non-violent or in militant ways, so long as her actions supported the Korean women in their struggle and did not endanger the lives of workers or customers.

In parts of the radical Left, the proactive approach to solidarity of the Red Zora met and meets with great enthusiasm. Most groups and individuals in the New Women’s Movement, however, did not endorse this approach. Instead, they gave priority to a notion of reflective solidarity. Not all women who promoted reflective solidarity categorically refused militant protest. As we have seen, Christa Wichterich and other feminists endorsed a diversity of tactics.

Like reflective solidarity, proactive solidarity does not imply a fixed position on violence. Whether concrete expressions of solidarity involve violence depends on a number of factors including the political stance of the actors involved and the geo-political context in which they act and

421 Focus group with three former members of the Red Zora on 17 August 2012.
situational dynamics that exceed their control. This chapter has shown that the politics of the Red Zora were characterised by the attempt to develop a distinctively feminist approach to violence. The militant protest against the clothing chain illustrates better than most campaigns by the Red Zora what the group meant by feminist counter-violence. With the arson attacks against Adler, the group wanted to support the cause of the workers in Iri and to promote feminist militancy in the New Women’s Movement. There, however, the attacks met with criticism. While many feminists in West Germany categorically refused violent protest, others were critical of the proactive approach to solidarity that the Red Zora promoted. Opinions may differ on the question of whether the Red Zora should be considered part of the Women’s Movement, but there can be little doubt that the violent attacks that the group committed can be understood as a form of feminist violence – at least according to the definition used in this thesis.
Conclusion

In the Introduction I identified two guiding questions for this investigation of female participation in political violence. Firstly, what roles did women play in the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ, and in concrete attacks by these groups? Secondly, to what extent can female participation in political violence in West Germany be understood as a form of feminist militancy? This qualitative study does not enable me to provide definitive answers to these questions, but the discussions in Chapters 2 to 5 allow me to offer a number of tentative conclusions about women’s involvement in militant leftist groups in the FRG, and to identify starting points for further research within and beyond this context.

Based on a detailed analysis of the history, ideology and activities of the four groups, this study finds that women participated in the armed struggle in West Germany at all levels, and that their roles ranged from carrying messages to taking leadership positions. It shows that motives for, and forms of, these women’s involvement varied between and within militant leftist groups, to an extent that has not been acknowledged in previous research on the subject. To offer an analysis that accounts for these and other constitutive differences, I have drawn on insights from three theoretical frameworks: new feminist materialisms, theories of sexual difference, and (Sub)Cultural Studies. And, borrowing a model from Rosi Braidotti, I have identified three levels of difference that can help us develop a better understanding of female participation in political violence: differences between men and women; differences among women; and differences within each woman. Following Braidotti, these
levels of difference ‘are not meant to be approached sequentially and dialectically’ (Braidotti 2011: 151). Rather, they coexist and intersect in everyday life and cannot be easily distinguished.

The first level of difference is relevant to this investigation for at least two reasons. Firstly, the active involvement of women in political violence in West Germany challenges the dichotomous distinction between male perpetrators and female victims. Drawing on previous research, the data examined in this study suggest that up to 50% of the members of the RAF, MJ2, RC, and 100% of the members of the RZ, were women, and that these women often played leading roles in attacks. The victims of these attacks, however, were almost exclusively men. 32 of the 34 people killed by members of the RAF were men (a share of 94%).

Fatal attacks by the MJ2 and RC were less frequent, but also targeted men. To my knowledge, there was only one direct attack against an individual in the history of the Red Zora, and it was directed against a man whom the RZ identified as a notorious trafficker in women.

By far most attacks against people by the groups in this study did not target individuals on the basis of gender, but because of their alleged functions within the existing political and economic system. Yet this does not mean that there was no gendered dimension to these attacks. Not only were the vast majority of the targeted individuals men, but parts of West German society in the 1970s and 1980s perceived female involvement in

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422 For the most part, victims of the RAF were male police and custom officers (n=12), bankers, managers and other public authorities (n=10), soldiers (n=6), and drivers (n=4). Becky Bristol, who died in a RAF bombing on a US military base in Germany, and Edith Kletzfeld, who died in a shootout between members of the RAF and the police in Switzerland, were the only female victims of the group. For a detailed list of all victims, see: (Trinius 2007).
leftist political violence to be a challenge to hegemonic masculinity. That is, as discussed in Chapter 1, an anti-feminist discourse developed in the West German media of the period in which the ‘female terrorist’ was constructed as a threatening antithesis to the white heterosexual male citizen. With the emergence of the RAF and other militant leftist groups in the early 1970s, hundreds of bankers, managers, politicians, judges and other public leaders in West Germany had suddenly become potential targets of violent attacks. Although state, police and legal authorities took extreme measures to reduce the perceived threat, they could not prevent the assassinations, kidnappings and humiliations of leading public figures from continuing.

The second reason for the relevance of differences between men and women to the study of political violence, not only in West Germany but in other geopolitical contexts, is that they profoundly shape the tactics of militant groups. This thesis shows how, in the very first attack by the RAF in 1970, female group members made effective use of feminine accessories and stereotypes to liberate a comrade from prison. With wigs, sunglasses, feminine clothing and make up, they were no more ‘disguised’ than many women in their daily lives, but used femininity as camouflage to prepare a violent attack. In a double move, this tactic both drew on and radically broke with prevailing gender norms.

The case study in Chapter 2 indicates that this use of femininity as camouflage was initially no conscious choice: in fact, there is evidence that the founding members of the RAF considered femininity to be a

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423 According to Dominique Grisard, hegemonic masculinity can be defined as ‘a form of masculinity that is socially accepted to be dominant’ ['die in einer Gesellschaft als vorherrschend akzeptierte Männlichkeit'] (Grisard 2011: 37).
potential disadvantage in armed confrontations. But soon they realised that it could actually work in their favour. The RAF and MJ2 frequently used female group members to prepare and initiate attacks, probably because it tended to be easier for women to approach targets without arousing suspicion. Women in both groups concealed weapons by carrying them in handbags, prams and underneath feminine clothing. The RAF even developed a ‘baby bomb’, which allowed fighters to pass as pregnant women when smuggling explosives into buildings. Like other mimetic corporeal acts, the use of femininity as camouflage can be understood as a subversion of the existing gender regime. However, a tactical recourse to femininity is not inherently subversive or emancipatory. As discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, the use of femininity as camouflage must be distinguished from feminist social change strategies such as strategic essentialism, and from mimesis as discussed by Luce Irigaray, Rosi Braidotti and other feminist thinkers.

Differences among women form the second layer in Braidotti’s model. So far, research on female participation in political violence in Germany has concentrated on differences between violent women in militant leftist groups, and non-violent women in the women’s movement and in society at large. It is important to acknowledge that the overwhelming majority of feminists, and of women, in the FRG at no point considered violence to be a legitimate means of political protest. But we should not jump to the conclusion that feminists in West Germany drew exclusively on non-violent means of protest, or that all militant women categorically rejected feminist ideas. This thesis finds that there
were at least three different positions on feminism among women in the militant Left.

Many militant women endorsed gender equality but did not identify as feminists. They – as one interviewee put it – ‘wanted to liberate all humans not only women’ (see Chapter 2). Other women identified as feminists but combined campaigns on women’s issues with activities that seem hardly compatible with a feminist stance. Finally, there were radical feminists who considered the exploitation of women to be one of the earliest and most universal forms of oppression and a governing principle in patriarchal structures. These women formed the Red Zora and carried out violent attacks to act against legal and illegal forms of discrimination and violence against women.

While many feminists condemned such militant protest against patriarchy, a number of feminist groups endorsed the activities of the RZ. Occasionally, less radical groups such as the editorial panel of the feminist magazine EMMA expressed ‘clandestine joy’ at attacks by the group. Although most feminists draw mainly or exclusively on non-violent means of protest, the Red Zora and other militant leftist groups show that feminist protest does not have to be peaceful.

Different notions of feminism and of revolutionary politics were not the only dividing factors among women in the RAF, MJ2, RC and RZ. They had different class backgrounds, jobs, sexual orientations, and belonged to different age groups. Most had no children, but some were mothers. While it seems that all of these factors had an impact on the

424 The definition of feminism used in this thesis shows that I do not share this limited understanding of feminism. This constituted one of a number of differences between some of my interviewees and me.
personal development of individual women and on group dynamics, this thesis could only touch lightly on most of them. The question of motherhood, for instance, deserves an attention that I could not give it in this thesis. Only one of my interviewees had children, and she was reluctant to discuss her experiences as a mother. The role of different sexual orientations in militant subcultures is another topic that deserves further investigation. Like motherhood, sexuality is a very personal issue on which many women find it difficult to share their views and experiences with a broader audience, if they have not already taken a clear choice to do so (as have some women, for instance the former RAF member Astrid Proll, and the former RAF and MJ2 member Inge Viett).

Chapter 5 shows that differences among women need not only be forces of division but can also provide a basis for solidarity. The discussion of the solidarity campaign for the Flair Fashion workers illustrates two different forms of solidarity among women. ‘Reflective solidarity’ begins with communication and involves constant dialogue. Solidarity actions by individual actors and groups are enabled and constrained by consensus reached in this communicative process. ‘Proactive solidarity’, by contrast, begins with action, seeking to use concrete expressions of solidarity to create and amplify dialogue. Whilst acknowledging that the situations of women vary greatly due to different class positions, living conditions, sexual orientations and other factors, both forms of feminist solidarity involve practices that bring women together across these differences, enabling them to work and fight together against exploitation and oppression.
Differences within each woman constitute the third level in Braidotti’s scheme. According to Braidotti, each woman is ‘a multiplicity in herself: split, fractured’ and ‘in motion among multiple temporal axes’ (Braidotti 2011: 157). This notion of woman as a subject-in-becoming is of paramount importance for research on female participation in political violence, because it provides a constant reminder of the dynamic, complex and often unconscious force of corporeal and emotional processes within the life of each woman. It is simply wrong to assume that women can only be feminists, militants, activists, intellectuals, lovers or mothers.

Sarah Colvin’s book *Ulrike Meinhof and West German terrorism* (2009) shows how one woman was all of these things within the course of a few years. Yet for Meinhof and other women in the RAF, the decision to join the armed struggle was also a decision against their former lives and families, against all passions, and against all paths other than that of the committed militant. Colvin’s study is one of the first scholarly publications to acknowledge and explore constitutive differences, changes, and contradictions in the life of a woman who joined a militant leftist group in West Germany. Ulrike Edschmid succeeded in providing a similarly detailed discussion of the life of the former RAF member Astrid Proll in literary form in her book *Frau mit Waffe* (2001). Meinhof is long dead, but Edschmid’s book and this research project show that a number of former members of militant groups in the FRG are still alive and willing to discuss their experiences.

The interviews I conducted for this research project gave me unique insights into the complex emotional and cognitive processes in
which former fighters remember and repress, contextualise and totalise, criticise and romanticise, aspects of their armed struggle. Unlike Meinhof, a number of women in the RC and RZ tried to combine a range of activities and identities including those of feminists, militants, activists and mothers. Further research needs to be conducted to develop a better understanding of the ways in which women related and relate to such a range of identities and identifications. In the course of this investigation, it became apparent that a number of my interviewees are also very interested in this question, and would like to work on it with me in a future project.

An approach combining theories and methods from Cultural Studies, philosophies of sexual difference and new feminist materialisms enables us to explore the constitutive roles that differences between women and men, among women and within each woman play in violent attacks and in discourses on political violence. Moreover, it allows us to take a step back and ask how differences come to matter, and which differences matter to whom (Barad 2007: 90). This thesis found that some women who have carried out violent attacks in the 1970s and 1980s tried to advance a feminist agenda, while the majority did not identify as feminists. Apart from an academic interest in exploring new territory in research on political violence, why should we investigate such a marginal phenomenon further? I believe that studies in this field can offer valuable insights into the possibilities and limitations of feminist activism in the 1970s and today. Most importantly, however, research in this field raises theoretical and political questions of central importance. How do we distinguish between feminist and non-feminist protest? Can feminist
protest ever be violent? If so, could or should we consider the women in
the Red Zora and other militant groups with a feminist agenda ‘sisters in
arms’? Rather than trying to come up with definitive answers to these
questions, this thesis has sought to make a first step towards a discussion
of feminist protest that is critically aware of our active role in the
constitution of this phenomenon.
Appendix

Newspaper and magazine articles about Baader’s rescue and the trial of Schubert, Goergens and Mahler, as used in Case Study in Chapter 2 (see p. 132).


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