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CHAPTER III

ANYTHING GOES IN LOVE AND WAR

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A Well, if something is in anyway bad, you have to try and get rid of it somehow, no? You can't just sit there and keep quiet, no? It was the in-thing then, no? Everything that went on, everything that was, now we're here and this is paradise. Yes, it's great... the best... jeans and Coca-cola. Yeah, that's what was in when I was a teenager, jeans and Coca-cola. And then I fell out with a boy I had known since childhood who lived in the East, no? And he told me all about socialism; it was in the fifties, when the GDR¹ was still very much okay. Bloch and the other writers all went to the GDR. It was only much later that everything somehow became so stupid there. The boy finished telling me about it and then I said: "Tell me though, can you buy yourself jeans and drink Coca-Cola?" It was the fifties, beginning of the sixties, no? Berlin was a frontlines city. At school it was drilled into us that it was a city on the frontline, no? Ernst Reuter², "People of this world, look upon this city!" I heard it on the radio and thought (*Breaks off*)... I found it absolutely stupid, because the people who lived above us always went over to East Berlin to get their meat provisions and everything, no? You could at that time. But not my parents no. We had to starve, rather than support communism. That's how it was. Even at school. Our class was taken to the Titania Palace, there was some sort of American event called "Moral Rearmament". Yes, and what a spectacle it was. I didn't understand anything and also thought it was pretty stupid. But we had to go, that's the way we were brought up. (*Pause*). Well, my belief in Coca-cola and jeans gradually crumbled. (*Laughs*). Even so I enjoyed dancing Rock 'n'Roll, no? It was the fifties, beginning of the sixties. (*Pause*) Yes and then I went to Hamburg and saw what a difference there was between West Germany and Berlin. We were poorly dressed, we had nothing. We never had shoes for instance and then when we did get shoes from West Germany and it rained once, they disintegrated on my feet. Yes, they were stuck together with I don't know what kind of glue. Well yes, it was already (*Breaks off*). Berlin was simply a case apart, no? After the war it was a child's paradise. An adventure playground. No cars. The ruins, yes, it was fantastic. No woods. There in Pomerania, when we lived in the barracks, yes, there was a wood around it, no? But in Berlin everything had been sawn down. Yes, as a child I found it difficult to get used to Berlin. I could never settle in because of course we came from Pomerania, no? My father wanted to keep us out of harm's way and that's why we were there, on a farm, in

¹ German Democratic Republic

² Ernst Reuter – Mayor of West Berlin 1948-1953



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Pomerania, no? I spent my days there in the stables, because I didn't want to listen to the horrifying stories the adults told. The adults were scared and consequently at first I was scared of any uniform when the Red Army chased us. When we fled. When Grandfather was dragging that sack. While we were fleeing they didn't want to talk anymore. And then it was all over. We were in Berlin then, no? And when Grandfather died we were able to open that sack, no? The sack that he never let go, the sack full of shoes, loads of shoes. Bundled together in pairs. *(Pause)*. Well, it was difficult to settle in Berlin. But then I grew all the more attached to it. Yes, whenever I travelled to Berlin by train and heard anybody speaking with a Berlin accent, I'd go and sit near them. "Ha, I'm home again!" *(Laughs)*. Yes, Berlin was Berlin. What went on at the end of the fifties, beginning of the sixties? *(Pause)*. It was the end of the sixties already and my daughter was at nursery. The nursery had been established by students with children, no? And they became more and more politically involved. And I had never been politically involved at all before, none of it had interested me at all. I was interested in painting and so on, but it became pretty intoxicating, that's how the atmosphere was then. Children were brought up completely differently. There was a new atmosphere among people. Well for example, one of my most incisive experiences was with a friend in a bar. Two students came in starving and ate our meals. And then they suggested that we should each speak of ourselves, well divulge something of ourselves. What our lives were like, what we did and so on. I had never done anything like that. Never. It was taboo. Family matters were simply never talked about. It was clearly nobody else's business, no? To me it was really shocking that they wanted that from me. I froze and began to sweat and then one of them said to me "Go on, throw a glass of beer at the wall!" Bang! I'd smashed the glass of beer against the wall, nobody realised who it was and with that it was over, yes, and I hadn't said anything at all about myself. Not a thing. And of course it was like that at nursery too, no? Suddenly family matters were all revealed, you spoke about how you were bringing the children up, that they should verbally settle disputes amongst themselves; they weren't allowed to fight. I was always fighting as a child, no? Anyway loads of things were totally new to me. And in a way *(Breaks off)*. I didn't really have a firm stance, I just thought, well yes, they're probably right; maybe this is right and its better this way, no? And *(Short pause)* well, I really floundered, which later I regretted partially, no? That my child wasn't allowed to defend herself with her fists or anything, no? It struck me later as pretty outrageous. *(Pause)*. Yes, the nursery days brought me into contact with the League against Imperialism, or whatever it was called. It was a far left communist party anyway; I went there a couple of times and listened to everything. You had to read Marx and understand Mao. Both of which really didn't interest me, no? But they were all so involved and so I went along with them and started to go to demonstrations. On June 2nd, for example, I was right in front of the opera house when Ohnesorg³ was shot, no? And then I went more often to demos, because in a way *(Breaks off)*. I felt *(Breaks off)*. I was furious about what happened there, because I had experienced it close up, no?

B Then the news came that the demonstration had been quashed and Benno Ohnesorg had been shot. It was a setback. Putting it simply, before that there had been a mood of change and curiosity as to what was in store. In those days at the seminary all three of the houses in which the students lived were still connected to a sound system in the porter's lodge. In the mornings either a Bible passage of the day, or one of Mao Tse Tung's quotes was relayed over the sound system, according to the whims of whoever was on porter's duty. There wasn't a student movement at that time yet. We had a work group "Christian-Marxist Dialogue", a small group, it was an exciting project. The question of....Yes,

³ Ohnesorg, Benno (1940-1967) Student shot by police during a demonstration in West Berlin.



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(Pause) of the world's future. The matter of the Third World became very important— how should it continue? What influence did Europe have? Decolonisation. There were still many colonies then, although little by little they were to become free. That was something that we were occupied by, it mattered. We were a group of theology students and we weren't sure whether we wanted to become ministers. Yes, that's how it was back then; well we said, we don't know if we still really want to go into the ministry, or want to go into the church community; even though we still partly believed that the church community was something that had survived. (Pause). Anyway, it was a time when if we went out into the community we were suspicious. We never went alone, but in groups of four to save ourselves, as we said, from being swallowed whole by it. And we wanted to see how it is (Breaks off). Yes, we couldn't readily think of an alternative, apart from working for political parties or something, although we were very critical of the foundation of some political parties. We didn't think it possible to create an emancipated, self-determined world...well, society, through state institutions. We didn't really have anything in sight, although in those days, yes, what can I say, there was the KPD/AO⁴, the KPD/ML⁵, the SEW⁶, the DKP⁷, well all sorts, KBW⁸ and any other thing with a K. But I didn't really identify with any of these groups. That's why I was always distanced from them. Only then it happened. The news broke. Ohnesorg shot, that was the start.

C It was evening already, but it was still light. The opera starts at eight pm, so from about 6pm we had started to gather in Krumme Strasse, there was a clear view of the entrance area of the opera house from there. The Shah and Farah Diba⁹ were supposed to turn up with a large political following before the start of the opera at 8pm and we wanted to protest against the fact that a Shah who oppresses his people was to be given an official reception.

A Many of the Shah's opponents were intellectuals, studying in Berlin at the Free University, no?

C We West Berliners wanted to fight for freedom because we had the Wall and the totalitarian East on our doorstep.

A Not only had students gathered together, there were also ordinary people, who wanted to see Farah Diba and her Shah in the flesh.

C And the Persian students were right at the front, with slogans written in Persian on placards and things, which they held up high so that the Shah and his men could read them.

A I stood with my back to the opera house, opposite me was the fence of a building site very close to the pavement.

C You think it's an ordinary demonstration, where you always want to stand and watch right at the front, in the first row.

⁴ Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands/Aufbauorganisation - Communist Party of Germany/Development Organisation

⁵ Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands/Marxisten-Leninisten –Communist Party of Germany/Marxists-Leninists

⁶ Sozialistische Einheitspartei Westberlins – Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin

⁷ Deutsche Kommunistische Partei – German Communist Party

⁸ Kommunistische Bund West Deutschland – Communist League of West Germany

⁹ The Shah of Iran and his wife



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A Some have got paper bags over their faces with Reza's Pahlavi's¹⁰ mug on them and Farah Diba and her shah will be coming in a minute, invited to a gala performance in West Berlin's German Opera. They're doing "The Magic Flute".

C Because of this there's a surge forwards from Zille Strasse and Krumme Strasse towards Bismarckstasse and it gets tighter and tighter.

A The people didn't have any room at all, no?

C You can't get through to Bismarckstrasse, the wide street in front of the opera house, from Krumme Strasse because there are barricades.

A It's cordoned off and this is of course where Krummestrasse joins Bismarckstrasse.

C And the buildings to the left and right are unfinished, in other words they're building sites. So not only are there police barricades at the front, but left and right are fences around the building sites and so it's like a very narrow pig pen, it's simply not possible to go forwards any more.

A And now they're expected to disperse quickly, no?

C We are of course behind the barricades.

A And some have climbed up them and are yelling.

C Those who are at the top start yelling.

A They're coming. They're coming. They can see everything.

C Those of us standing below on the street can't see anything.

A Fresh demonstrators keep pressing forwards from behind.

C And the police are at the back.

A Some of the police have got horses.

C And push their way further forwards.

A And to the left somewhere are the "Hooray Persians".

C And the so called "Hooray Persians" are in front.

A What we call the "Hooray Persians".

C They don't just cheer because the Shah is coming.

A They beat the demonstrators.

¹⁰ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi – Shah of Iran 1941 - 1979



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C They're supposed to protect the Shah. The Shah brought them with him from his secret service, from his police apparatus, I don't know which, anyway, that's why they're standing here, as strangers of the state, as foreigners, working with the local police.

A And here comes one police van after another and the head of operations says "Go, march, march!" and they start lashing out.

C The Persian students shout Persian slogans.

A And somehow everything was in total confusion.

C People tripped over each other.

A But then the police still looked quite civilised, no? They were wore white caps, you could still see their faces, yes. And they had rubber truncheons, they were armed.

C Then we started to shout German slogans as well and (*Breaks off*) and the closer the convoy with the Shah and his dignitaries came the louder we shouted of course. Things like "Out with the Shah" and "Down with the Shah" and (*Breaks off*) that sort of slogan. The more we shouted these things from behind the fence and the barricades, the more the "Hooray Persians" hit out. There was more and more pressure from behind, because even more demonstrators had joined in and I think it was umpteen thousand although I didn't count them, but it was as crowded as sardines in a can. There was nothing but noise and to try and get away from it was no longer possible. It got tighter and tighter and you had the same feeling as at other mass gatherings, that at some point it will become so crowded that a person can't escape this density and can only move with the masses. But then at some point the police came from the back, well, behind us. At the beginning the police had only been in front of us, but now they were behind us too. Well it was so crowded that there was no way that you could retreat anyway, that's when these slogans were going round, we didn't hear them until later, but that's what the situation was, they used, the police used the same tactic as with liver sausage, squash and then stab the skin in the middle and squeeze it all apart, that's what it felt like. Somehow they came from Schillerstrasse and of course you tried to get out of the way, many tried to climb over the boards and fences of the building sites, many tried to escape through the hallways and back courtyards of buildings that had been left unlocked; which in those days was more often the case than it is today. I did this too; I escaped into the yard of a garage where cars were parked. That was precisely when it happened to Benno Ohnesorg. But if I had to testify in court as to whether I heard the shot, I wouldn't be able to say that I actually did, because the racket was so, well, it was impossible to distinguish which noise was a shot. You can only say, and others who were a bit further away have confirmed this, that in amongst the din you could only assume that it was a shot. But it was (*Breaks off*)... Once there had been shooting the agitation increased, because of course there were students in the immediate proximity of the shooting. It's often been shown, the way the woman in an evening dress crouches over Benno and looks into the camera horrified and those who were around there saw it of course and passed it on by word of mouth, "My God somebody has been shot" and it became like Chinese whispers. Yes, and that's probably why some said it was the cops who had done the shooting and some said that it was the students.



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A And everyone was hysterical anyway, because in April at Easter, Humphrey, the vice president of America, had been. Kennedy had already been shot, Nixon was already president and Humphrey was vice president. He was driven up and down the Ku'damm, as was the practice in West Berlin in those days, there was already a Commune 1¹¹ then (*Pause*) and the communards had supposedly tried to assassinate Humphrey with plastic explosives, which of course had caused great hysteria. And Benno Ohnesorg and what had happened to him, made the headlines all over the world.

C That student who lies there with a woman in an evening dress bending over him, lying there dying in a garage yard, in front of a Volkswagen Beetle. He was still alive then, he'd received a head wound from the police officer, but at that point we didn't know that, while I was in the thick of things, trying to save my own life by not being squeezed to death, trying to avoid being beaten by the "Hooray Persians and the local police. The beatings were no joke; of course I didn't want to be beaten and everybody else also tried to save themselves. At that point there was no talk of a shot. We knew nothing about it, but then it was said that a student had stabbed a police officer with a knife. The hours dragged, unfortunately I no longer know how long it was, there was a rumour abroad that one of our students had stabbed a police officer with a knife, there was no talk of a shot. In that respect I only heard all that about a shot later and then (*Breaks off*) then (*Breaks off*) then everyone tried, my friends and I were torn apart of course, staying together was impossible, there was a heaving mass of pushing, shoving and the dodging of police truncheons everywhere, but eventually I made it. Compared to this demonstration all other demos of the time were walks in the park, small demonstrations, smaller, on the Kudamm. The word was always that you met on the Kudamm. The meeting point was always Kranzlereck, because in those days we didn't have mobiles and things, you know? So you had to have some location for central communications and for us it was Kranzlereck on the Kudamm, that's where I actually heard it for the first time. (*Pause*). It was a shock for a long time, we couldn't believe it. It was the second shock after the terrible beatings. The police really hadn't held back with their truncheons. The other shock was that one of our students actually had stabbed a police officer, something we hadn't believed was possible, but that was the official police announcement. Then accordingly shocked we went to the Kudamm, but then it turned out that it wasn't true, no? One of us had been shot instead.

A I stood in a good place in front of the opera house, protected by the police, no? I was standing there by coincidence, no? But I witnessed everything that went on. Though I don't think I heard the shot itself, because there was such a racket, no? It was either in the midst of things or the shot came after. We lived quite close by in those days, yes, I think at some point in the chaos we fled. Then the people fled too and I don't know how it ended. I didn't realise that somebody had been killed until the next day. Yes. (*Long pause*). It was a shock. That the police shot somebody never happened before and the next day it was absolutely clear that he (*Breaks off*) that he had shot him.

C From behind. It was spun out, blurred by constant newspaper articles and the like, "No, self-defence!" and who knows what else. But basically by the next day everything was perfectly clear.

A Well until then I had always thought that the police were relatively harmless, no? Well that they look after law and order, they hit out now and again, but they don't shoot anybody dead. And this belief was (*Breaks off*).

¹¹ *Commune 1 – Kommune 1 - First politically motivated commune in Germany*



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B Albertz, the mayor of Berlin, took responsibility and stepped down. Albertz, who wasn't just mayor, he was also a pastor. Albertz.

C I once happened to be at a spot on the Kudamm where there was a police van and that's when I realised that all the informers gathered there.

B There were always demonstrations there. They were mostly demonstrations against Vietnam, against the Vietnam War. We all thought the Vietnam War was horrifying. That's why everything revolved around it in those days.

A Well, I went to demonstrations with people from the nursery and other friends as well, there were always a number of us.

B There were mass meetings in the university's auditorium. The injured came to the front and lamented their sufferings at the microphone: "Yes, and then he hit me, look at this!"

A Once, as we were running away, a line of police covering the whole road came towards us. We ran at them and I heard one policeman say to another "Oh let's let her through." And they did let me go past, I waited there somewhere to see what would happen to the others (*Breaks off*). I don't know anymore.

C And we always had lawyer's numbers with us. Things were partly organised already. It was self-protection.

A Well, there were always lots of arrests. Or they were simply bundled into a car and driven to Grunewald, or somewhere and left there so that the others didn't know where they were, no?

C But the first actions of the people who were later to call themselves the RAF¹² were explosive attacks on a department store in Frankfurt, that was September, October, well, end of '67.

A Burn, store burn, I don't know, but they used an English word somewhere in their flyer.

C At that point in time it wasn't yet... you couldn't imagine that the RAF would do such a thing at that early point.

A Until then it was still relatively peaceful as far as weapons were concerned.

C Violence was limited to cudgels, that perhaps you carried a cudgel, or of course cobblestones, which was also awful.

A Yes, the students who leaned towards Christianity mostly went to demos with a cross, crosses made from pieces of wood. God, what other weapons did you have? None.

C And I could never have afforded to damage anything; I was a poor child from a working class background. My father wasn't a director, or factory owner, he wasn't well insured and

¹² RAF – Rote Armee Fraktion – The Red Army Faction - West German, leftwing, militant group, considered terrorists by the West-German government.



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if they had caught me my father would have killed me.

A The people were anyway conditioned to always remain peaceful, no? Always non-violent. Non-violent, non-violent, non-violent. That nothing would ever change. Whenever something was started up which threatened to bring about change, the state showed its teeth. Then it shot to kill.

C And later I heard about Jan Raspe¹³ ending up with the RAF: He was also a sociology student, such a gentle, quiet, likeable person who lived in Commune 2, a child-loving, young man. How could he become so changed by the RAF?

A I stood in front of the advertising pillar one morning and (*Breaks off*) the main founder of the RAF, who kidnapped Baader...um, freed him from prison. They were searching for Meinhof with wanted posters and so on. I knew her from interviews and things; she was a very intelligent woman who held really good discussions. She was wanted?

C He was at the Palestine- what's it...camp, with Baader and was trained in weapons, no? To use a Kalashnikov, together with those people, what do I know. He lived in Commune 2, I went there often.

A I thought the RAF was ok. I thought that this intelligent woman who had tried everything...written newspaper articles, held discussions, yes, (*Breaks off*) she had tried everything to bring the people (*Breaks off*) to their senses. What else could she do? I would probably do exactly the same, yes, if I had got really involved. Anyway at first I thought she was ok. I couldn't ever say that anywhere of course, no?

B Anyway now the police are everywhere: People with long hair, old folk, housewives, anyone in the population that you could possibly imagine danced up and made reports.

A And then the German Autumn¹⁴ came, no? When nobody (*Breaks off*) The people didn't trust friends in bars anymore. Nobody had the courage to voice their opinions or anything, because everybody was under suspicion of being a sympathiser, yes? This German Autumn held such an atmosphere of oppression.

B That's the way everything was carried out with the RAF, here. I personally had a friend who was also a vicar, at some time there were court proceedings against him at the State Security court in Frankfurt, because he had once put Ulrike Meinhof up for the night in Marburg. I accompanied him there and had to give a character statement about him and that sort of thing.

C So much fear was spread, because new laws had been made concerning sympathisers. Anyone who somehow, somewhere, voiced any thoughts which shed a negative light on the state was suddenly a criminal.

B As a result we became familiar with that sort of confrontation, here in Berlin too, with the

¹³ Jan Raspe (1944-1977) – Member of the RAF- Died of a gunshot wound sustained in prison. Conspiracy theories abound as to the origin of his wounds.

¹⁴ German Autumn – Deutscher Herbst - a series of terrorist events in West Germany in 1977



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murder of Drenkmann¹⁵ and Bishop Scharf¹⁶ and everything else that had become part of the daily order of things.

C You should say gangs. Not groups or organisations even, but gangs. I don't know if at that time some people were betrayed and arrested because of it. That's what happens when you're in two minds. An atmosphere spread, an atmosphere of fear (*Breaks off*).

B Drenkmann was the murdered president of the Supreme Court and Scharf... Bishop Scharf, tried to persuade Ulrike Meinhof, who was imprisoned by then, to stop her hunger strike. Because of this the Springer¹⁷ press slammed Scharf and he was given the reputation of, I don't know, the bishop of terrorists, things like that.

A It was awful. The scene was set and there they all were again: Springer with his newspaper and the other powers that be, there was nothing new, no? The top brass were staunch Nazis. That's when I first understood, no? That the entire Nazi regime had been taken on by West Germany, yes?

C That with Kiesinger¹⁸ and state of emergency laws and whatever they were all called and (*Breaks off*) it was almost as though lots of things had continued. I don't think it was just accidental, in both the Ministry of Justice and the Foreign Office (*Breaks off*) there were people, who after the war had (*Breaks off*). There wasn't a single head of department who hadn't also been in the NSDAP¹⁹

B The question of God, of the Bible, of a force that might lie behind, above, or below this world was already suspect to us back then. The leading question wasn't "Have you been baptised?" rather it was the question of what is wrong here; what conflicts and problems are there here. Turkish, Greek and Italian neighbours were also an issue. Put an end to the enemies of Germany, alias traitors to the nation, alias journeymen without a fatherland, alias the scum of mankind outside the city walls. Bring an end to lynch law. There was this picture of the funeral of the murdered Drenkmann, which of course Bishop Scharf also attended, in which Scharf is standing completely isolated from everyone. Before the Synod he used the New Testament parable of the tax collector in his defence, where Christ depicts visiting the least of brethren as a basis for the decisions to be made on Judgement Day. "And even if they should err in every respect, we must look after them: To leave them alone is even worse and dangerous." But it was already clear that, to a church between the fronts, any side would appear to be a dangerous tool of the opposition. The headlines of the daily newspaper "Die Welt" described Albertz, who was still a simple pastor in the late summer of '77, as "weird" and "slightly confused" after he spoke on television in "Word on Sunday" and said: "Thou shalt not kill" applies to each of us, all who possess the power to wield violence, even governments, companies, major banks, unions, political parties and associations, yes, and the great churches too. Whoever wants to be credible in their condemnation of terrorist's homicidal acts should first ask themselves, how they themselves employ violence to ruin lives. For instance; by investing money in countries where people are tortured and liquidated, through negligence in their use of the State

¹⁵ Günter von Drenkmann (1910 – 1974) - President of the Berlin Supreme Court, shot by the 2nd June Movement, a left wing West German terrorist organisation.

¹⁶ Kurt Scharf (1902-1990) – Bishop of Berlin – Brandenburg 1966-1976, provided pastoral care to the Baader-Meinhof gang in prison.

¹⁷ Axel Springer (1912-1985) - publisher

¹⁸ Kurt Georg Kiesinger (1904-1988) - Chancellor of West Germany 1966-1969

¹⁹ NSDAP – Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei- National Socialist German Workers Party



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authority with which they have been entrusted, by remaining silent about developments that are detrimental to the freedom which our constitution offers. Those who react harshly and yes, remorselessly to the murders of Berlin, Stockholm, Karlsruhe and Oberursel, should judge themselves by the same standards with which they judge others. I therefore maintain: Those who use violence, kill not only themselves, but all of us. To this I add that our society produces its own murderers.”

And then Albertz really got going.

“It begins on our streets with thousands of traffic accident fatalities and ends with the chilling effect of our military armaments throughout the world. This stretches from police actions to the distressing results of the Radicals Decree.²⁰It refers to the ruthless exploitation of the concept of freedom, according to the law of the strongest and the moronic intolerance of both right and left extremists, with whom it is impossible to hold serious discussions.”

“Die Welt” thought it “weird” and “confused”, but the editors of “Die Welt” omitted the passages in which Albertz spoke directly to the terrorists: “After all, you want to live and enable others to live. I beseech you to think it over. Remain human. That’s what you are, aren’t you?” And Albertz went even further. “Today...I will target directly and speak clearly to those who still believe they can secretly rejoice at the death of somebody powerful. Those who help further terror, either in the foreground, or background. You are helping murderers. And just as bad you are aiding every reactionary turn from freedom and peace in our country. Yes, you are discrediting every critical, radical, civic attitude. I say this as a vicar. To put it more modestly: as somebody who is trying to be a Christian... Whoever uses brutal violence, whoever commits murder, whoever supports murder, is not only guilty towards his immediate victims. He severs all connection to life, he destroys the image of man as a creation of God; he ends up there where once we all ended up, when a murderer governed our people.”

A Well that was the start. Then we all sank into an all time low. The judges and the entire system began beating full pelt, they didn’t use rubber truncheons this time, but everything they had.

C It was the first political legal proceeding in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1945, but it had to be presented differently in some way, as a an ordinary criminal court case, that’s how it was.

A They built a fortress around it, so that nobody could free them you see. What nonsense. They were gloating, how efficient we are, neat and correct, that’s what was meant, that it was shown who had the last word now.

C Although the matter of the Vietnam War had really started it all, it was denied because official politics went hand in hand with the Americans.

A But it wasn’t easy, no? They locked them up in isolation. And they retaliated with hunger strike. They created a circus and the show was stolen from them.

C It has to be said that it was pro-American...Politics with a capital P. It had to be because however you look at it Berlin was supported, held and protected from the Russians by the

²⁰ Radikalenerlass – Radicals Decree (1972)- A response to terrorism, anyone deemed a terrorist was banned from working in public service. Those already employed in public service were threatened with dismissal should they fail a loyalty test.



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American. So you weren't allowed to say anything against the Americans, in the same way as those in the East weren't allowed to say anything against the Russians. In the end it's the same thing.

B Thus the court had virtually ruined the state, because being in isolation only leaves one alternative; as Meinhof said so well, the prisoner is forced to either let everything out, confess everything and thereby become a traitor, or he is forced slowly into silence and that is called torture.

A By the end they had plastered the cells with bugs and with this bugging scandal everything was so confused that you really wanted to finally understand things.

C When the case then took on a political nature it just confirmed what the RAF people had always implied about this state and its justice system. That its one goal was to slay its enemies, that everything revolved around this and that the state would only feel secure when the prisoners were dead.

B And then Ulrike was dead.

A That's when I managed to get a certain book, I bought the RAF's texts under the counter, I invested a fifty, no? I kept it hidden at home. There are enough people who have "Mein Kampf²¹" in the book case.

B And things became more and more constricted.

A But I didn't find anything in it, nothing, just lots of slogans and I sold it again in the end.

B And then they were all dead.

C Now many thought they're all dead at last.

B And then they were all dead at once.

C They were taken away and then they were buried anyway.

A And on that day you felt... (*Short pause*) that something strange had happened, no? You could say that on that day precisely our youth was over.

C And at that point we all felt like one (*Breaks off*) like one big family, a family in which somebody has died and which, I don't know, clings together speechless for a little while.

B What came up then was a great deal of resignation, although there was absolutely no reason for it, (*Short pause*) but by now there was an excuse for it. (*Short pause*). Nevertheless, to remain silent was in one way or another hardly possible. Then when Kreuzberg was cleared as well... the superb old houses torn down, redevelopment politics, speculation politics.... it was the vicars who were always the ones who tried to mediate between the various parties involved. I was therefore more inclined to say that my position was in the middle of the discourse, rather than saying I was wholly on any particular side. We tried politics from a theological point of view. A Christian must be a socialist. No. How does it go? A Christian must be a socialist? I think so. (*Long Pause*). A socialist must be a

²¹ Mein Kampf – Notorious book by Adolf Hitler, comprised of his political and racist ideas.



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Christian. No. A Christian must be a socialist. Anyway we tried it along those lines. Oh well. To some extent we then took on separate roles, one of us would provide pastoral care for prisons, whilst another would be in an institution for the disabled. I was also in the area of care for the homeless. Always surrounded by people who were seen as down and out, that sort of thing. We met up and exchanged stories, discussed things, gave seminars and made offers. Exactly, we had all these boards: "Living should not become a commodity". We fought for life there! Anyway first open your eyes, then look and then open your mouth. *(Pause)*. Well it's *(Short pause)* it's still like that. Yes. What we noticed in the parish communities then was simply that contact with people had changed us a bit. Or changed us a quite a bit. Yes, well that *(Breaks off)*. To us, at first, serving the church meant working with senior citizens, the elderly. And the thought *(Breaks off)* yes, perhaps that has *(Breaks off)*. I believe that the question of what should be changed has never *(Breaks off)* never been answered. Instead it must be asked again and again and new answers must be found. And *(Breaks off)*, but we're not *(Breaks off)*. Well perhaps our vision was to be, in some way, the centre of the universe. Yes, to have the awareness that we have the awareness to change everything. I am the central point, I have everything under control, I am he the one who shapes things. That has disappeared bit by bit I think. And then, over time, to realize, well *(Breaks off)* that the question of change is much older than us. Yes, it's always been there. And you should trust that some things which you start will perhaps be finished by others, or not finished, or maybe something else will develop from them, that many others are a part of it and that development is collective. Well, that you simply *(Pause)* yes, like a patchwork quilt, sometimes you did a bit, but not right now *(Breaks off)*. And other people have visions, ideas and I don't know what, yes, thoughts that we had simply overlooked. And *(Breaks off)*.