

CHAPTER 5: THE AUTONOMEN IN UNIFIED GERMANY

Seldom steady, the pace of history can be wildly erratic and entirely unpredictable. Sometimes it seems that an entire decade elapses without major transformations in international relations. At other times, breathtaking changes occur in a few days or weeks, as in November 1989, when the Berlin wall came down. Nearly everyone immediately recognized the enormity of the changes underway, but few people expected the subsequent results. In the aftermath of the heady days of the end of the Cold War, East Germans rushed through the wall to have their first experiences as western consumers, and the government quickly jumped through the window of opportunity to unify the two countries. In the vacuum of power, two social movements emerged: As is well known, thousands of neo-Nazis violently attacked foreigners, murdering and brutalizing them in what was meant to be an ethnic cleansing of the German nation; and during the same period of time, the Autonomen spread their movement to the east. In this chapter, I discuss both these social movements.

The neo-Nazi upsurge after German reunification coincided with a larger shift in the political landscape of advanced capitalist societies -- the international appearance of ethnic chauvinism on a level unattained since World War II. At the end of this chapter, I probe the deep nature of the problem of German identity and find it even to exist within the views of some of the most progressive Germans. At their best, autonomous movements pose a species-solidarity that transcends ethnic exclusivity. By critically posing the failure of even some of the most progressive Germans to go beyond their Germanity, I seek to portray the need for a new species universality. To the Autonomen, neo-Nazi behavior was latently present in the personality structures of individual Germans as well as the nation's social structures. When immigrants were violently attacked and murdered, the Autonomen came to their defense sometimes more rapidly than the German police.

At first glance, the ineptness of the political elite, tellingly revealed in its inability to manage smoothly the economic aspects of reunification, was also to blame for the latitude afforded the xenophobic Nazi minority. A realistic assessment of the actions of government officials, however, reveals less incompetence and more glaring deficiencies of four decades of de-Nazification in both eastern and western Germany. In 1990, as neo-Nazi attacks broke out throughout reunified Germany, the police bloodily repressed the Autonomen but gave neo-Nazis a green light. Judges regularly sentenced perpetrators of violent attacks on immigrants to light fines or short jail terms; government officials made a deal with a rampaging anti-foreigner mob in Rostock, permitting the pogrom to have free run of the city; the Social Democrats joined with conservatives to deport tens of thousands of Roma (as Gypsies prefer to be called) and other immigrants and changed the constitution to seal off Germany's borders to refugees seeking political asylum and economic opportunity.

German reunification occurred most dramatically in Berlin, where thousands of people tore down the wall. The wall's fate--its being sold in pieces--quickly happened to all of East Germany, as speculators from around the world bought up much of the country. Despite rosy promises made by Helmut Kohl about the economy, Germany slid into its deepest slump since the end of World War II. While construction cranes hovered on all sides of Berlin's Potsdamer Platz, the former no-man's land along the wall now slated to be home to corporate megaheadquarters for such giants as Sony and Mercedes (Daimler-Benz), the German parliament decided to move the federal government there. Although the *Bundestag* will probably not convene in the Reichstag until the 21st century, in the first day after the vote in Bonn, housing prices in Berlin jumped another 5% on top of the 50% increase since the reunification of Germany (100% in Kreuzberg). Very quickly, commercial rents soared as much as 900% in parts of the city.¹

Despite the common expectation that the radical direct-action movement in Berlin would disappear with the opening of the wall, especially since West Berlin was run by a leftist coalition government, the reverse was true. A new wave of more than 130 squats engulfed the old eastern part of the city. Massive police attacks on the largest of these in the Mainzerstrasse made it impossible for the Alternative List (Berlin's equivalent of the Greens) to continue governing the city in alliance with the Social Democrats. As in 1981, the initiative of the squatters' movement led to the downfall of the city's government. In 1990, however, the government of a unified city tumbled and fell, not because of clumsy, cold-war realities but from the impact of local initiatives. The Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats quickly formed a grand coalition to insure the governability of Berlin, testimony to the inability of either major party to carry through a policy of repressing the Autonomen.

Within the autonomous scene, many were convinced the coming of the capital would leave little room for them in Berlin. They feared that rents in Kreuzberg would become so high that it would no longer be home to Turks and Autonomen but yuppies and government officials. Rather than move out, they vowed never to surrender their base in Berlin without a significant struggle. As one group summed it up: "Since October 3, (1990--the day of German reunification), the government has been blowing a storm against the Left...A new phase of the confrontation is now beginning. In the future, we will have to deal with even stronger repression. But repression breeds resistance, and this much is clear: We will give no quarter. If their goal is a capital city Berlin, we will build a front-line Berlin. They will gain no peace and quiet in which to conduct their disgusting behavior, and this is no empty threat!" In response to the new constellation of power, groups immediately formed to work against the existing plans to bring the Olympics to Berlin in 2000, and research collectives exposed the authorities' plans for urban renewal and gentrification. Others initiated small-group anti-yuppie actions, attacking upscale restaurants, expensive automobiles, and fancy shops.

In the old eastern part of the city in the months following the *Wende* (turn to a new epoch, as people refer to the collapse of Communism), factories closed by the dozens, rents skyrocketed, museums shut their doors and disposed of their collections, libraries threw away mounds of books and universities were purged.² Cutbacks in daycare undermined the economic independence of women in the East, and stricter regulations governing abortion further impinged upon the ability of eastern women to determine the course of their lives. Undoubtedly, the most odious aspect of reunification was the rise of neo-Nazis.

NEO-NAZIS AND THE STATE

With reunification, the far Right seized the political initiative and was able to consolidate and expand a considerable base of support. The Republicans, a neo-fascist party, received nearly a million votes in the national elections in December 1990, and although they did not enter the national parliament, the far Right attracted a sizeable following among German youth.³ By waging a militant campaign against the influx of pornography and prostitution in the East (formerly forbidden except in state run brothels), they struck a sympathetic chord among many people who otherwise would have been repulsed by their fascist politics. During times of economic hardship, the Right's attempt to channel frustration against the nearly six million foreigners living in Germany may have permanently altered the political and social landscape of Germany. In order to stop the arrival of refugees, the constitution (or Basic Law as it is called) was amended by the Bundestag in May 1993.

As we have already seen in the case of the anti-nuclear movement, direct actions played a central role in changing government policy, and after reunification, neo-Nazi skinheads pushed the government as hard as they could. Although they stayed out of Kreuzberg for fear of being beaten up,

thousands of young Germans took it upon themselves to Germanize their newly united country. Flush with patriotic pride as their nation unified, bands of young hoodlums roamed the country, attacking Vietnamese workers, Turkish immigrants and any foreigners -- Polish tourists on shopping trips, Americans looking for a party (like the Olympic Luge team) or British schoolteachers on holiday. They brutalized Vietnamese children in kindergartens, sent Greek children on their way home from school into the hospital with broken bones, attacked disabled people in their wheelchairs, and set homeless loners on fire. Other favored targets of the skinheads included punks, gays, lesbians, and anyone who looks like a non-conformist. In the suburbs and countryside, many German youth were compelled to choose between joining the neo-Nazis or hiding. Neo-Nazi youth enjoyed themselves at football games and rock concerts. Their Oi music, a fusion of punk and heavy metal that expunged African influences from rock, was popularized by groups with names like Destructive Force (*Störkraft*) and Evil Uncles (*Böse Onkelz*). With lyrics like "Germany awake!" (a slogan used by Hitler) and "Turks out!" skinhead music encouraged attacks.⁴

The casualty list from one month, May 1991, is indicative of the wave of violence. Two Namibians in Wittenberg were thrown off the fifth-floor balcony of a foreigner's hostel by a gang of neo-Nazis. In Dresden, a band of drunken Republicans attacked 40 Soviet children who were seriously ill from Chernoble and were in East Germany for treatment. The house where the children were staying had its windows broken, and burning torches were thrown inside. When the police finally arrived, they saw no reason to make any arrests. On the night of May 6, there were three separate fights involving skinheads. In Hanover, 50 fascists attacked Turkish youths in the train station, and in the ensuing melee, one skinhead was injured when the Turks shot him with a flare gun. In Scheessel, after an empty house had been squatted by Autonomes, fascists attacked it. In Kiel, another squatted house was marched on by skinheads, although the squatters quickly drove them off. During May, one of the squatted houses in what used to be East Berlin was invaded by a band of skinheads in the middle of the night, and several people were badly beaten before help arrived; a bar on Alexanderplatz was also attacked.

These examples are certainly not an exhaustive list, but they convey the feeling so common then that something might happen at any moment. In 1991, several Autonomes living in a squat in eastern Berlin told me that they knew four people who had been killed by neo-fascists in the last three months. Although skinhead attacks occurred throughout the country, Dresden was selected by fascist organizations to become a stronghold of the far Right. In November 1990 (at the same time as hundreds of Autonomes in Berlin's Mainzerstrasse were being evicted by thousands of police), neo-Nazis squatted an empty house that became their base of operations. Foreigners were warned to leave the city. In March, fascists threw a Mozambican worker off a streetcar and killed him. Although the police initially refused even to write down the names of witnesses who wished to see the assailants arrested, they later added that case to the more than 35 other attacks which were scheduled to be adjudicated in the courts. On New Year's Day at one in the morning, the Cafe Bronx (the city's first radical bar) was invaded by skinheads, smashed up and then burned out. When the owner called the police, he received no response. He ran to a nearby paddy wagon, but it pulled away. When he returned to the bar, he was savagely beaten. Needless to say, the bar never reopened. That same winter, a Vietnamese hostel was attacked by neo-Nazis with axes and molotovs. Employers in Dresden have told their foreign workers to avoid walking at night since it is "life threatening." Leipzig, Saxony's largest city, was reportedly just as dangerous. In an attack modelled on Dresden, a German longhair was killed there on June 6 after being thrown from a streetcar.

The porno dealers and pimps who moved into eastern Germany also did not take the fascist attacks on them lightly. On May 31, 1991 they killed the leader of the most militant neo- Nazis in

Dresden. For the German media, the killing (and subsequent days of rampage by skinheads) were simply more proof that eastern Germany was sinking into chaos, that the "wild, wild East" was destined to become home to bank robbers, neo-Nazis and other outlaws. The killing was particularly embarrassing for the federal government since it occurred on the same weekend that they had invited foreign ministers from the European community to come to Dresden to invest in its future.

In 1991, police estimated the number of hard-core members of neo-Nazi groups in eastern Germany at slightly more than 2000, a figure regarded as notoriously low by most knowledgeable persons.⁵ By the end of 1992, as attacks on foreigners mounted, the government estimated there were more than 40,000 right-wing extremists in Germany, of whom 6500 were classified as neo-Nazis.⁶ More than 23,000 right-wing extremist crimes were investigated by police in 1993 alone. Altogether, at least 80 killings were attributed to fascists between 1990 and 1994.⁷ The "brown network" of skinheads, neo-Nazis, old Nazis, and neo-fascist parties also apparently includes many police. Among 2426 police reserves in Berlin, 607 (an astounding 1 in 4) had prior associations with the Right, and half of the entire force were reputed to vote for the Republicans.⁸ Police have also been linked continually to mistreatment of foreigners. In 1995, Amnesty International published a report accusing police of dozens of such cases. In Bremen, the police systematically mishandled, and in some cases tortured, African and Kurds who had the misfortune of being arrested.⁹ In Hamburg, 27 policemen were eventually suspended after being accused of abusing foreigners.¹⁰

The upsurge of neo-fascism at the beginning of the 1990s was not purely a German phenomenon.¹¹ Parties like the National Front in England and France (where Le Pen has received almost 14% of national votes), Fini's National Alliance in Italy (with 13% of the votes in 1994, enough for 5 cabinet seats in the Berlusconi government), Jörg Haider's party in Austria (which has drawn almost 20% in elections) and the Progress Party in Denmark and Norway are practically indistinguishable from Germany's Republicans. Skinheads first appeared in England, and there have been reports of them attacking people even in normally sedate Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Belgium.

Contrary to popular belief, the violence in Germany was not mainly in the east. Government statistics consistently showed that more attacks took place in the western part of the country. In eastern Germany, however, European neo-fascists (and their American friends who supplied them with money and printed their propaganda) calculated they had the best chance to entrench themselves, and that is where they concentrated their resources and energies. They knew well in advance that the campaign promises of an easy transition to a prosperous future made by Helmut Kohl and the Christian Democrats were politicians' jargon. At the end of August 1991, the official unemployment rate was 12.1% (1,063,200 out of work), and another 1.45 million people were working reduced hours or being paid simply to show up at work. Half a million more were forced into early retirement, meaning nearly one worker in three was unemployed. Government subsidies for the transitional period paid these two million people, but the money was phased out at the same time as rents rose sharply.

The housing crisis was nearly as bad as the shortage of jobs. Under the Communists, rents in East Berlin were fixed at one mark per square meter, but they quickly shot up to between four and six marks per square meter, a 400 to 600% hike! Over 500,000 homeless people were counted in West Germany before reunification,¹² but there were few homeless in the East since everyone was guaranteed a place to live and evictions were constitutionally prohibited. In reunified Germany, however, homelessness grew rapidly, one of the most visible signs of the consolidation of a postmodern regime of

accumulation.* At least 80,000 people in both West and East Berlin were looking for apartments in 1990.¹³ Because the Communists were perpetually short of cash, many old buildings had been left empty for years -- at least 15,000 vacant apartments in what used to be East Berlin (perhaps 200,000 in all of eastern Germany).¹⁴ The housing stock there was in such bad shape that even conservative estimates were that 34,000 of the inhabited dwellings had no private toilets and 72,000 were without showers or baths. The population of Berlin is expected to rise from 3.5 million to 5 million over the next 20 years, so the shortages of decent jobs and housing are expected to get worse.¹⁵

As we know today, economic downturns more often result in fascism than revolution, and the more severe the downturn, the better chance a severe turn to the right will occur. Despite the temptation to posit a facile economic explanation for the resurgence of Nazism, many German sociologists regard the emergence of neo-fascism as conditioned by more than economic factors. The list of causal forces include the atomization of life, a convoluted sense of what being a man entails, and the fragmentation of what had been a relatively stable social system. Perhaps most important is the peculiarity of the German context. In plain English, once the wall came down, East Germans became second-class citizens, so pride in Germany became a means of promoting their own superiority vis-a-vis foreigners. Rather than live an obscure existence and wait for opportunity to knock, many choose to fight for the purity of German national identity as a way to be somebody. The anonymity and depersonalization of consumer society, which in the affluent West produced the New Left of the 1960s, had an entirely different outcome in the 1990s.

Beginning in 1990, neo-fascist groups like the Republicans and National Democratic Party joined the ongoing Monday demonstrations in Leipzig which played a key role in mobilizing opposition to the Communist government, and it became more difficult for leftist groups to participate. In one instance, protesters opposed to the presence of neo-Nazis were spit on by other demonstrators who called them "children of the Stasi" (the former secret police). Although neo-Nazis existed in East Germany prior to the fall of the Communist regime, they were unable to organize publicly and the police were generally unsympathetic. Not so in reunified Germany. The police regularly provide them with protection and almost always attack counterdemonstrators. In July 1990, after neo-Nazis had mounted attacks on foreigners, the police moved in to do the job for them. At many train stations, police used tear gas, water and clubs to prevent Polish, Bulgarian and Romanian asylum seekers from getting off trains.

For more than a year, the world watched as Germany's future seemed to hang in the balance. Dozens of pogroms broke out in different parts of the country. During the first one in Hoyerswerda in September 1991, hundreds of youth attacked Angolans and Vietnamese in their houses while townspeople cheered. Either through stupidity or design, the government exacerbated nascent contradictions between foreigners and Germans. In Rostock, a building used as a youth center was taken away from local people and turned into a temporary housing facility for refugees. The resentment over this building's transfer to foreigners could have been easily allayed by allocating an alternative site, but none was provided, and in August 1992 Rostock became the scene of the next major pogrom. More than a thousand people attacked a refugee center containing hundreds of Romanian gypsies and Vietnamese workers. Shouting "Next to us, the Hafenstrasse is nothing!" the crowd stayed in the streets for nearly a week, attacking foreigners and strutting in the media spotlight and support of the populace -- and the local police. As one observer described it:

One thousand neo-Nazis in Rostock firebombed a building housing 200 Romanian

*See Chapter 7 for discussion of postmodern capitalism.

Gypsies, while demonstrators chanted 'Sieg Heil.' Onlookers applauded and chanted 'Germany for the Germans.'¹⁶

The police chief made a deal with the mob under which the police withdrew from the city for four hours, time during which the rightists were given free rein.¹⁷ When the refugee center was set on fire with at least 100 Vietnamese inside, the fire department refused to answer the call for help and the police were nowhere in sight. A German television crew was caught in the burning building. Using their cellular phone, they contacted their network in Berlin, from which phone calls were made to Bonn which eventually resulted in police and fire intervention to save the German reporters (and the foreigners). As neo-Nazis roamed the city, the pogrom spread to at least a dozen other towns and cities. Only when Autonomen converged in force on Rostock did the attacks cease (and the police appear in large numbers). After nearly a week of terror, there had been only about 100 arrests, but on the first day of the Autonomen counterattack, the police detained more than that number of antifascist activists.

Combined with Chancellor Helmut Kohl's refusal to visit Rostock after the fighting had ended, police and government cooperation with the neo-Nazis left little doubt that anti-foreigner violence would be allowed to run its course. Emboldened by government inaction and media attention, neo-Nazis embarked upon a systematic campaign of murder: The subsequent firebomb deaths of two Turkish children and a grandmother in Mölln and five Turkish women in Solingen were neither the first nor the last criminal homicides committed by those bent on establishing a Fourth Reich, but they shocked the country. In their wake, hundreds of thousands of Germans marched with lanterns to protest the violence in processions called *Lichterketten*. In Munich, 300,000 people turned out; in Hamburg, 250,000; in Essen, 300,000; and in Nuremberg, 100,000. Besides marching in candlelight processions, progressive Germans distanced themselves from neo-Nazis by demonstrating at government offices, volunteering to work at asylum centers, and by reinvigorating a militant anti-fascist movement.

Nonetheless, neo-Nazi attacks continued. Left activists were targeted, and several were murdered in different parts of the country. Without substantial opposition, the right-wing violence and murders provided impetus to the prompt passage of anti-immigrant legislation by the *Bundestag* that swept through the parliament with support from both major parties. On July 1, 1993, the new laws regarding asylum went into effect, a victory for the neo-fascists after which their extremist violence subsided. Under the provisions of the new law, the number of asylum seekers permitted to enter Germany was drastically reduced. Other legislation had already succeeded in deporting tens of thousands of foreigners. The first to go were the Roma. Ignoring a Helsinki Watch human rights report issued in September 1991 which detailed the mistreatment of Roma, Germany offered to pay Romania millions of dollars to take tens of thousands of them back.¹⁸ During the Third Reich, more than 500,000 Roma were murdered in a systematic Nazi extermination campaign, and German public opinion remains remarkably hostile to them even today, as the chart below details.

How Germans view foreigners and minorities

Group	Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't know
Vietnamese*	56	29	15
Jews	52	24	24
Soviet emigres	37	31	32
Turks	35	46	19
Poles	31	50	19
Romanians	28	44	28
Gypsies	19	59	22

*Only East Germans were asked their opinions of Vietnamese

SOURCE: Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, 1991.

While a majority of those polled had a "favorable" impression of Jews, only 19% were so inclined to regard Roma. By 1995, as the government supervised ethnic relocations, it reportedly paid tens of millions of Marks to the government of Vietnam in exchange for their taking back thousands of Vietnamese workers stranded in Germany after the end of the Cold War.

The rulings of German courts have also played a large role in encouraging the revival of Nazism and fomenting racism: Five skinheads, convicted of beating to death an African immigrant on November 25, 1990 in the eastern town of Eberswalde, were sentenced to two to four years. Three men who pleaded guilty to attacking a residence for foreigners during the pogrom in Hoyerswerda were sentenced to probation. In court, they expressed frustration at being unemployed and at failing to rob a Vietnamese street vendor. Before announcing the reason for his leniency, the judge described their crime as a common one. In other cases, a judge ruled that an anti-fascist group, *SOS Rassismus*, which had guarded a residence for foreigners in Nauen for five months, would not be permitted in the house because they "disturbed the quiet at night." Another judge in Hildesheim blocked construction of a residence for foreigners seeking asylum on the ground that "odors from the home might disturb neighbors." In Flensburg in the fall of 1992, a judge ordered restitution of 10% of their travel expenses to a group of German tourists because they had to endure the "sickening" sight of disabled people in the breakfast room of their hotel. Such rulings were not confined to lower courts in small towns. The federal court in Karlsruhe, the country's highest appeals court, overturned the conviction of the leader of the far right National Democratic Party by ruling that his claim that the holocaust never occurred did not in itself constitute incitement to racial hatred. Although the ruling was later reversed, the ambivalence of judges reflected the huge base of neo-fascist sentiment.

In order to understand the context of these rulings, it should be pointed out that de-Nazification was short-circuited in West Germany by American authorities whose priority (as determined in

Washington) became fighting Communism, a struggle in which former Nazi enemies became valuable allies. No Nazi judges or attorneys were ever convicted in the FRG's federal courts. The political and psychological structures of post-war Germany carried within them extraordinarily anti-Semitic and authoritarian characteristics. A few examples should suffice to demonstrate: On January 3, 1953, the West German patent office in Wiesbaden issued a patent to J.A. Topf and Sons for the design of the crematorium at Auschwitz and other Nazi camps, a patent for a "Process and Apparatus for Incineration of Carcasses, Cadavers, and Parts Thereof" which contained a design innovation: It used the fat of burning corpses as fuel for the furnaces. Forty years later, at the end of July 1993, the commandant of the Nazi death camp at Treblinka (where about one million people were murdered, the majority of them Jews) was released from prison after serving 34 years despite an appeal by state prosecutors. In some parts of West Germany, Hitler's anti-Roma laws remained in effect until 1970, and the statutes used by Nazis to imprison homosexuals were not thrown out until 1969. Even as late as 1995, the Bavarian town of Plattling published an official list of honorary citizens that included "Adolf Hitler, Reich Chancellor" and "Heinrich Himmler, SS-Reichsführer."

The policies of the German government criminalized and reversed the Communist past while turning a blind eye (or worse) to the Nazi legacy. Property in the eastern part of the country that was nationalized under the Communist regime -- but not under the Nazis! -- was returned to its previous owners. If there was one thing which united the US and the USSR during the entire Cold War, it was the belief that the Junkers -- the old Prussian land-owning aristocracy which had built up German militarism and supported Hitler -- would not regain control of their estates. Nonetheless, the German government's policy was to deny Jews whose property was confiscated by the Nazis any chance of regaining it while restoring Junkers' estates. Other prominent features which also legitimated the Nazi past include the fact that former Stasi chief Milke's conviction and sentencing was not for actions he committed while running the East German secret police but for the murder of two policemen who hunted him when he fought against ascendent National Socialism in 1931.

Public opinion and small-town parochialism also served as effective barriers to an open multicultural society. In Dolgenbrodt, many of the town's 260 residents met on two occasions at an inn to discuss how to keep foreigners out of the asylum home which was being constructed. At their second meeting, they passed the hat, raising \$1200 which they paid to neo-Nazis to torch the building. Although the man arrested by police for arson was released for lack of evidence, the case was reopened after the *Taz* reported the above story.

Even after the murders in Mölln and Solingen, Chancellor Helmut Kohl refused to attend the funerals of the victims, the subsequent memorial services, or their burial. When Kohl publicly declared that "Germany is not a country of immigration," he left no doubt where his sympathies lay. A senior American diplomat accused the government of encouraging skinhead violence against the nearly seven million foreigners legally residing in Germany. As arson attacks on foreigners spread throughout the country, Germany was summoned before the United Nations Human Rights Commission to explain why it was not doing more to protect foreigners. The government finally moved. It banned 11 of the most militant hate-groups and cracked down on Oi music, but it also deported tens of thousands of foreigners seeking asylum. But these measures increased the stature of the Right, the former by adding the glitter of illegality to their appeal, the latter by giving the impression that their goal of a foreigner-free Germany was finally being implemented by the *Bundestag*.

While economic crisis and the political vacuum in the East are important dimensions of the explanation for the reappearance of Nazism in Germany, how identity is constructed and understood in everyday life -- by Germans of all political persuasions -- also needs to be considered. To put it in a

nutshell: one's identity is one's blood. In the United States, an individual's descent is traced through their family's national origins, but in Germany, biology is destiny. One's national identification are equivalent to the national origins of one's genes. Thousands of people born and raised in Germany who speak no language other than German are not entitled to citizenship if their parents do not have German blood flowing through their veins. German-Americans from Texas who don't speak a word of German have a better chance at becoming citizens than third generation Turkish-Germans.

The German problem revolves precisely around this construction of identity on the basis of biology as opposed to territory. Hitler launched his extermination programs to purify the gene pool, not to reduce unemployment (and his mass murder succeeded in accomplishing that goal). To "engineer" correct genes, disabled persons were targeted alongside Jews, Roma, gays and communists. Ironically, those who explain Nazism as Teutonic propensities to violence carried in German genes share common assumptions with Nazi concepts of biologically-determined behavior. While their evaluation of German national character traits differs, they similarly conceive its roots in biology.

As in past decades, the future of Germany hinges on events in Berlin. The neo-fascists predicted that in ten years, streets and squares would be named after Adolf Hitler and shortly thereafter, the Fourth Reich would appear. Their electoral slogans were "Berlin must remain a German city," "Germany for Germans" and they railed against the "Jewish-American conspiracy" planning the "New American World Order" (presumably one which does not allow Germany its proper role as a great power). Their demand for "equal wages for German workers in all of Germany" resonated in eastern Germany where wages (and prices) were kept artificially low by the Communists. At the beginning of 1989, the Republicans were elected to the city council of Berlin with 7.9% of the vote (enough for 11 seats) and another neo-fascist group won seats in Frankfurt. In 1992 and 1993, the Republicans had impressive vote tallies in Baden-Württemburg and Schleswig-Holstein, but they received well below the 5% mark in the national elections of 1994.

AUTONOMY AND ANTIFASCISM

The German government's failure to halt the advancing neo-Nazi movement after reunification came as no surprise to the Autonomen. In their view, the FRG's governing elite contained many former Nazis, and few doubted that most police were secretly members of fascist groups. Given the failure of their parents' generation to stop Hitler's rise to power, is it any wonder that the Autonomen militantly fought resurgent Nazism? Radicals often wore "*Gegen Nazis*" (Against Nazis) patches, part of a wardrobe which was more than a political statement, since these patches were a defiant invitation to combat in any chance encounter with a group of skinheads. Many Autonomen interpreted the candlelight vigils as Germans' attempts to look good in the international press, not as signs of their having overcome the racism endemic to their heritage. When Chancellor Kohl and President Richard von Weizsäcker, the same political leaders who refused to crack down on neo-Nazis and debated how to stem the flow of foreigners into Germany, attempted publicly to parade as being against violence at a huge rally in Berlin, Autonomen pelted them with eggs, paint-bombs and tomatoes.

Believing the police would do little or nothing to stop attacks on foreigners, the Autonomen took it upon themselves to do so. They attacked the squatted neo-Nazi center in the Lichtenfelde neighborhood of Berlin in 1990, and mobilized scores of counterdemonstrations that prevented Nazis from marching. As an antifascist movement grew out of the Autonomen, it gathered momentum as it disrupted public events sponsored by neo-Nazis and came to the rescue of foreigners under attack whom the police were unable (or, as many people insisted, unwilling) to protect. The antifas (as anti-fascists are known) were one of the sources of support for a multicultural Germany. They campaigned

for voting rights for foreign residents and made special efforts (like printing leaflets in several languages) to include them in their events.

The refusal of many people to be "good Germans" brought them into conflict with both the police and neo-Nazis, and the resultant street fights added to the chaos as well as to the demands for "law and order." In March 1989 (before the wall came down), about 1000 antifas tried to evict one elected Republican from his office, but the police intervened. On April 20, 1989 (the hundredth birthday of Hitler) antifas prevented many planned fascist rallies throughout Germany, but they were then brutally attacked by the police. After the usual street fights, the media turned its wrath on the antifas, accusing them of subverting the democratic principles of modern Germany. Even the **Taz** justified the police attacks by saying that the antifas "were armed to the teeth." The **Taz** ran daily stories warning against antifa direct actions, since the Republicans are a "democratically elected party." Apparently, the **Taz**, like their counterparts in the Greens, will stop at nothing to defend the existing system of representative democracy. For them, the rights of the minorities being attacked were less important than the maintenance of the rights of German neo-Nazis to participate in government.

Standing alone as the sole opponents of neo-Nazi participation in government, the antifas were compelled to organize themselves more effectively. In May 1989, the "National Alliance of Antifas" was established with active groups in 10 cities and organizing committees in a dozen more. On October 14, sixty antifa women prevented the Republicans' chair from delivering a speech to another right-wing party, and he had to be escorted to safety by the police. By the time the wall was opened (November 9, 1989), the police were in no mood to show restraint to the antifas. As millions of East Berliners visited West Berlin for the first time in their lives, a neo-Nazi rally in front of the Reichstag, permitted by the authorities, was "cancelled" by Autonomes, who then had to turn and face a police assault. In Göttingen on November 17, an Autonomes woman was chased by police onto a highway, where she was killed by a speeding car. In the following days, downtown department stores, banks and government buildings were attacked by Autonomes in more than 30 cities. On November 25, in a tense and emotional mood, more than 15,000 people gathered in Göttingen. The masked "black block" was 2000 strong, and when the peaceful demonstration ended, they attacked the police, 90 of whom were injured in the ensuing battle.

The media made the Autonomes appear to be perpetrators of violence just like the neo-Nazis. When Autonomes and neo-Nazis clashed, the state appeared neutral and above social conflicts. For their part, the neo-fascist movement enjoyed their new visibility, all the more so since their treasuries were augmented with millions of dollars raised in the U.S. After squatted skinhead houses in Dresden and Frankfurt (on the Oder) were evicted, new ones were quickly purchased. The German government's ban on printing Nazi literature was circumvented by having most material imported from the U.S. As Klansmen and right-wing racists from the U.S. made appearances in Germany, the far Right developed its thinking to include new constituencies. An internal memorandum of the Deutsche Allianz (one of the most ambitious of the many fascist formations that rose to prominence after reunification) ordered: "Social drop-outs and previously neglected strata have to be approached and politicized, even when this causes conservatives to turn their noses up." Targeting the constituency of the Autonomes during the Gulf War, neo-Nazis showed up as "supporters" at peace rallies, and they approached squatted houses of the Autonomes with an offer to ally against police attacks, an offer few houses agreed even to discuss. The dangers to the Autonomes were that their base might be turned rightward, but also that the federal government was using the Right against them.

Between the fall of the wall and reunification, as attacks on immigrants spread, anti-fascist mobilizations were the most pressing matter for many activists. In August 1990, more than 1000 fascists

were permitted to parade in Wunsiedel on the anniversary of Nazi Rudolf Hess's suicide, and when 2500 antifas showed up to stop them, the police attacked. On October 2, 1990 as midnight (and German reunification) approached, demonstrations began in many cities. In Berlin, 8000 Autonomen marched out of Kreuzberg carrying banners reading "Never Again Germany" and "Shut Up Germany--That's Enough." As they made their way to Alexanderplatz, street fights broke out with the more than 10,000 police who surrounded them, and the fighting lasted into the night. In Göttingen, more than a thousand Autonomen marching behind a "Nazis Get Out" banner created chaos in the downtown area. While most Germans were jubilant in their nation's moment of glory, the Autonomen's isolation tellingly revealed their distance from the mainstream.

As the antifa struggle intensified, it created space for foreigners to organize and gave them encouragement to defend themselves. After the murder of an Afro-German woman in Berlin in January 1990, a Black Unity Committee formed. On November 16, 1990, a 20-year-old Republican was killed after he and his associates chased 3 Turks who got into the same car on the subway. The neo-Nazis had pulled pistols out and threatened the Turks, but one of the Turks quickly used his knife to wound two of the attackers and kill the third. Grudgingly, neo-Nazis were compelled to begin rethinking their attacks, although it would take years for them to admit it. Perhaps more than anywhere else in German political-culture, minorities found space for themselves within the contestational universe created by the Autonomen. Beginning in 1987, Turkish youth gangs participated in radical street fights, sometimes to the chagrin of Autonomen hoping for a peaceful event. In Frankfurt and Berlin, youthful minority street gangs developed distinct (sub)cultural forms that indicated their integration into German culture.

While the harsh reality of German politics and prejudice in the 1990s demanded that the autonomous movement expend much of its energies in the antifascist struggle, the Autonomen also continued to carve out free spaces within which the movement was free to develop itself and live according to principles of its own making. Ten years after the squatters of 1980, a new wave of building occupations occurred. The cultural hegemony of the far Right and the government's capability to muster thousands of police against the Autonomen meant that the movement's best efforts to build base areas would not be easy. The police had stood by while anti-foreigner mobs went on rampages, but they behaved quite differently with the Autonomen, particularly after they were ordered to assault their new base in the Mainzerstrasse.

THE BATTLE FOR MAINZERSTRASSE

Immediately after the wall came down, hundreds of vacant buildings in East Berlin and the relative vacuum of power there presented the Autonomen with a unique opportunity to seize new buildings and spread their movement to the East. Even before squatters from what used to be West Berlin moved into empty houses in the old eastern part of the city, the first houses there had already been squatted by locals. Beginning in January 1990, two months after the fall of the wall, and continuing to April, more than 17 houses were occupied by East Germans. In their negotiations with the interim authorities, these new squats were guaranteed the right to exist. On April 30, a group from Kreuzberg took over an entire block of 12 abandoned tenements in the Mainzerstrasse, five-story buildings which stood empty because they were scheduled to be torn down. One of the buildings was occupied solely by gays, another by women, and there was enough room for a movie theater, a bookstore, and several cafes and bars.

In the next few months, hundreds of squatters, many of whom had accumulated significant political experience in the west, took over abandoned buildings in the adjoining neighborhoods of what used to be East Berlin. The movement spread to Magdeburg, Erfurt, Potsdam, Halle, Leipzig and Dresden. An activist from Berkeley, California described the scene in Berlin:

Over 1000 squatters here from Germany mainly but also Italy, Canada, the US, Japan, Peru etc. have taken over old, dilapidated buildings and through sheer dedication and struggle, turned them into habitable buildings with communal kitchens, libraries, cafes and more--into a real community, a vibrant and colorful community where gays and lesbians are out and strong, where anarchists argue politics, plan actions and so on. And of course, 95% of these people have no jobs, making it even more remarkable that these buildings were revived from decay...The squatter/anarchist movement here is about autonomy, community, vitality and is not organized around, violence, street fighting and so on. Clearly thousands of hours of work has gone into finding, entering, repairing, cleaning, planning, raising money, dealing with bureaucratic petty officials, painting, partying all for the squats.

On July 24, housing regulations from the West became valid in what used to be East Germany. This meant that the "Berliner Linie," West Berlin's hard-line policy of clearing out new squats within 24 hours and compelling negotiations on the government's terms in remaining ones, would apply to the whole city. Facing imminent police action, more than 80 of the new squats organized a negotiations council which began discussions with the authorities. Their foremost demand was that the fate of all the houses be negotiated in one agreement. The city administration wanted no part of a group solution, citing the confusion over ownership of property in what used to be East Germany as the reason. Three months of negotiations produced nothing, and on October 8, the city abruptly broke off the discussions. Later the city's chief negotiator stated that a peaceful solution was "politically undesirable."

Over the next month, the squatters tried all available means to come up with a peaceful solution, but the authorities were determined to break the spirit of the movement. Individual contracts were acceptable, they said, but not the demand for a group solution encompassing all the houses. At 7 a.m. on the morning of November 12, three squatted houses were evicted in the vicinity of Mainzerstrasse. Autonomists gathered to protest the evictions and then paraded through the city chanting "Clear out the prisons, not our houses!" When the group returned to the Mainzerstrasse, hundreds of police and a watercannon awaited them. The police shot tear gas and water into the buildings on both sides of the street, although one side consisted of legally rented apartments. In one apartment, the tear gas forced the evacuation of a family with a very sick infant. The neighborhood's chief elected representative, Helios Mendeburu, implored the police to stop, but he too was shot at with tear gas and water.

The squatters feared that all the houses in Mainzerstrasse were going to be evicted and they began building barricades and digging trenches in the streets. At the same time, they called a press conference at which they announced their readiness to negotiate, promising that the barricades would be dismantled if the police would leave and the city would provide them with a written guarantee that they would not be evicted. Without warning, the police again attacked, this time with several watercannons. Not only was normal tear gas shot, but even stronger CS and CN varieties were used. A group of prominent city politicians from a spectrum of parties (Social Democrats, Alliance '90/Greens, the Party of Democratic Socialism and the AL) tried to form a human shield between the police and the barricades, and even though they were swept away by the water cannons, they regrouped and stood their ground for hours. Finally the police pulled back and began to talk with some of these prominent citizens (derisively referred to as "promis" in the scene). True to their word, the squatters dismantled some of the barricades and hoped for a negotiated settlement.

Throughout the next day, discussions continued. The squatters held another press conference, this time to counter the media's assertion that they were unwilling to negotiate.

Documents proving that they had been engaged in discussions with the city for six months were made available to the press, and they reiterated their willingness to clear the remaining barricades as soon as the city guaranteed not to evict them by force. Neither of these statements appeared in the mainstream media.

At five p.m., alarming news reached the Mainzerstrasse. More than 3000 police were to begin assembling in twelve hours for a final assault. According to their sources, the Berlin police were being joined by a wide variety of tactical police units from what used to be West Germany (*Sondereinsatzkommandos*, *Bundesgrenzschutz*) as well as by the equivalent of SWAT teams (special units of federal anti-terrorist troops which had been used in 1977 to kill the hijackers of a plane in Mogadishu). The former East German *Volkspolizei* (*Vopos* or People's Police) were considered unreliable. (One of the stories told about the *Vopos* has them evicting a women's squat. After the eviction, they locked the door and stood out front. The women simply went around to the back and retook the building through a roof door. They hung a sign out the front reading "Police 1, Squatters 1." The police simply walked away. They had only been ordered once to evict the squatters.)

After the news of the police build-up reached Mainzerstrasse, the barricades were strengthened and the ditches deepened. Under banners reading "Where the state stops, life begins!" more than 1000 people prepared the defenses through the night. The barricades were reinforced by car frames, beds and floorboards, and when they were finished, they were thirty-five feet thick. In the words of one squatter: "The support from outside was super. Many who didn't want to join the fight helped us in a variety of ways. An architect explained to us how the trenches had to be constructed so that the armored cars couldn't go over them, and a construction worker showed us how to use a jackhammer and a dredger. One of the neighbors put a loudspeaker in his window so we could be accompanied by good music."

At 3:45 in the morning, a fire of suspicious origin broke out in the basement of one of the tenements. The street was a flurry of activity as everyone gathered sand or formed bucket brigades to put out the fire. Someone tried to call the fire department but the block's one remaining telephone had ceased to function. Finally, fire trucks arrived and the barricades were cleared by the squatters to allow them in. As if by design, when the fire was finally extinguished, the telephone worked again.

At 6 a.m., the police moved in behind a thick cover of tear gas. Although forbidden in Berlin, rubber bullets were fired at squatters on the rooftops. The fire in the basement broke out again, but this time the fire department refused to help, so the squatters had to use much of their energy to extinguish it. The first armored police car through the barricades got stuck in a trench and had to be towed out. One of the watercannons was set on fire and was evacuated as it burned out of control. Police snipers wearing masks continued to fire rubber bullets at squatters on the rooftops, who in turn threw molotovs, paving stones and metal rods at the police below. Many of the injured Autonomen were treated on the scene by movement medics wearing gas masks and white helmets emblazoned with a red fist.

PHOTO HERE

Despite the determined resistance, the battle was over in three hours. More than 130 police were injured, four of whom required hospitalization. Even more squatters were wounded, particularly after the arrest of 417, nearly all of whom were beaten severely while in custody. Among the ranks of the more than 200 people who managed to elude arrest, there were many serious injuries. Beside the destroyed water cannon, 15 paddy wagons were also burned or destroyed, and the destruction caused

by the street fighting was estimated in the millions of marks.

The media sensationalized the events, reporting that it was "man against man, meter by meter, floor by floor." Berlin's mayor justified his unprecedent use of force by declaring that the squatters had been "prepared to kill." Reporters had said that the squatters were armed with Russian weapons (now cheaply available), but all that the police could say was that a pistol and a "super-molli" capable of burning a watercannon had been found in the building. The squatters had a variety of weapons for use against the police, but all denied the existence of a pistol. Moreover, despite the "man against man" headlines in the Springer press, 111 women were among those arrested, many of whom had been in the front lines.

That night more than 15,000 people (the **New York Times** reported the number to be "tens of thousands") marched through Berlin to protest. The Roman Catholic bishop of Brandenburg deplored the police violence, stating that "Violence of this sort, once begun, soon becomes endemic." The next day, counterviolence erupted. Autonomous groups occupied city offices in Berlin to protest the police violence, and even the Berlin police union criticized the attack: "Some 135 injured officers and untold plunder and destruction are the result of a flawed security policy," they said in a prepared statement. A student strike shut down the institutes for sociology, philosophy, political science and psychology at the Free University. Students wearing masks and signs parodying the mayor's comment about squatters being "ready to kill" refused to allow employees to enter some of the institutes. **Neues Deutschland**, the newspaper of the old Communist regime, railed against "the brutal police terror," adding that the East German police attack in October 1989 (on the 40th birthday of East Germany) was a "boy scout jamboree" in comparison to violence at the Mainzerstrasse. There were protests in more than ten other cities.

The defeat suffered by the movement at Mainzerstrasse dampened the spirit of resistance. The solidarity evident in the demand for a negotiated settlement including all the houses soon broke down, and the remaining squatted houses began individually negotiating the best deal they could get. For months, the squatters' council did not even meet. As people began to be sentenced to jail time for defending Mainzerstrasse, further demoralization set in. One man received a year for throwing a molli, a harsh sentence by German standards, but probably much less than the consequences he would have suffered for such an act in the US.

After Mainzerstrasse, Berlin's coalition government could not continue, particularly since the AL's base of support included many who identified with the squatters. Indeed, two AL representatives who sat on the city council had been arrested in the occupied houses but they were released under the rules of parliamentary immunity. In a meeting of the 11 elected representatives of the AL, they quickly agreed to end the coalition with the Social Democrats. Berlin's Social Democratic Mayor Momper criticized them for withdrawing from the government, calling their decision "the coward's solution of stealing away from responsibility when times get tough." The AL insisted they had neither been consulted on the decision to evict Mainzer nor had the city government even considered their offer to serve as intermediaries between the police and the squatters. Since Berlin is a city-state, the city council has control of the police, and Momper's decision to use force without the approval of the AL was plainly contrary to any notion of coalition government.

In the weeks following the eviction of the Mainzerstrasse, support for negotiated settlements was proclaimed by local politicians racing to insure that their constituents would be spared violence. Nonetheless, the police continued to evict other squats. Simultaneously, gentrification of Kreuzberg accelerated as the immense political changes associated with the fall of the East German regime revamped the cultural/political landscape of the western part of the city. Prior to the fall of the wall,

Kreuzberg was at the far end of West Berlin, but in the unified city, it lies near its center, within walking distance of the Reichstag and Potsdamer Platz. Many of the neighborhood's buildings were never gut-rehabbed ("sanitized," as the Germans call it) so architecturally as well as geographically, it has become quite a desirable place to live. The mix of Turks, punks, marginally employed youth and artists who live there is being forced out, not by police attacks but by the impersonal mechanisms of the market.

In response, autonomous groups seeking to preserve the independence and character of their neighborhoods intensified their attacks on yuppie entrepreneurs, leading to a widespread perception of the Autonomen as little more than neighborhood mafias (*Kiezmafia*). Seeking to create a "dead zone for speculators and yuppie-pigs," groups waged a concerted campaign against gentrification in Kreuzberg. They vandalized upscale restaurants catering to professionals -- in some cases throwing excrement inside -- torched luxury automobiles costing in excess of \$40,000, and repeatedly damaged businesses they deemed undesirable. The police were unable to stop these attacks, in part because there were so many possible suspects -- "1200 violence-prone Autonomen in Kreuzberg" according to their estimate. Autonomist intervention in civil society took many forms. In early February 1993, about a dozen Autonomen interrupted a speech by Alain de Benoist, whom they considered "one of the chief theoreticians of French neo-fascism." After escorting him from the lecture hall, they beat him, broke his glasses and left him in a distant part of the city. Later that month, another group stormed Sputnik, a small movie theater in Kreuzberg, sprayed the projectionist with teargas, and used butyric acid to destroy a copy of the film '*Terror 2000*,' which they considered "sexist and racist." They promised to return and "destroy everything" if the theater decided to play the movie again.

The desperation felt by many at the perceived invasion of their neighborhood lies behind the civil Ludditism they practice. Although not as acceptable as passively getting arrested, such actions are a form of civil disobedience. Many autonomists feel that in order to preserve their way of life, they must smash the machinery of consumer society and contest all the forces that seek to colonize their community. Despite continually negative press, unrepentant autonomists published a satirical year-end report, "*Autonomia Inc.*" modeled on a corporate balance sheet, in which they detailed dozens of neighborhood actions.

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF AUTONOMY

The above description of the scene in Berlin could easily lead outsiders to think that all of Kreuzberg and the squats in the east were occupied by hard-core radicals bent on fighting the police. In reality, much of Kreuzberg was comfortable, and many of the new squats were occupied by students and unemployed young people who had nowhere else to live. In a city where available housing was scant and the fee to move into an apartment was in the thousands of dollars, moving into a house with free rent was irresistible for many young people. Willing to risk little more than having to move out at the first sign of a coming eviction, they were called "opportunists" by those for whom squatting was a political act. For others, preservation of neighborhoods facing gentrification was the reason they occupied buildings. Squatters in Potsdam issued a statement that received much public support when they proclaimed the need "to prevent the destruction of the baroque quarter of the city" as one of their motivations to occupy empty houses scheduled for demolition.

Among the political squatters, a healthy and widespread skepticism toward their own importance was so strong that many refused even to characterize themselves as a movement, pointing to the opportunists among them and lamenting the new rental contracts agreed to all by all but a few of the houses. As one of them told me: "This is not a movement since the opportunist dimension is so strong. If the houses were to come under heavy pressure from the state, most people would simply take off." He

explained the new wave of squats in 1990 as caused by the collapse of the Communist regime and the global realignment of power ushered in by Gorbachev, not by the explosive potential of a restrained movement. The wall's opening was an unprecedented chance to squat a house and also to try to spread the movement to the east. But the cool reception they received dashed any illusions they might have had about the radical potential of East Germans.

As in 1980, for more radical squatters, the squats were a "liberated area" serving as "organs of revolutionary dual power" and a "starting-point for the destruction of the state and the system." But in 1990, activists were more modest and made less grandiose claims for their actions' importance. At a minimum, squatting actualized an attempt to live differently--to be part of a collective rather than living alone or in a patriarchal family. They were part of the resplendent "scene" that had emerged spontaneously and included cartoonists (notably Franziska Becker and Seyfried), mural painters, political bands, architects and artists of all media. Collectives contradicted middle-class prosperity and the isolation of consumer society. Group houses served an essential function by uniting people who otherwise would suffer severely from the alienation so widespread today. Particularly in smaller German cities, squatted autonomous centers played a vital role in providing a critical mass for the very existence of a movement. A leaflet from Mainz written by a group announcing its occupation of a new youth center put it this way:

We need a house in which we can build up our own non-commercial and unconventional culture and make real our conceptions of political work--without control or censure! We need immediately a center in which the possibility exists to work, to have events like movies, theater, concerts and discussions and above all to create a group living space. The high rents and lack of housing in university city Mainz are as much the reason to create living space as the isolation of apartments which are nothing more than toilets and silos in which today we are compelled to live.

Big enough to include movie theaters and practice rooms for bands, bookshops and bars, women's centers and some of the few openly gay public spaces, group houses were the basis for autonomous culture and politics. As one of the squatters explained their significance: "Politics assumes an entirely different relation to everyday life when last night's meetings are discussed over breakfast. Not only is the movement's progress accelerated, but truly important issues, ones which are lost in the shuffle when we live in isolation, are topics of immediate concern and action." The group houses which were fought for and won in 1980 and 1990 embody a collective form of life which negates the atomization of contemporary society; their egalitarian and leaderless structures stands outside normal hierarchical relationships rather than reproducing them; and collectively-determined campaigns and productions avoid alienation from the products of heteronomously-determined work. As opposed to the mainstream which views gays or immigrants as "other," within the scene, diversity is the rule, not the exception. While German racism remains a national problem, Kreuzberg and other movement neighborhoods have more than their share of immigrants. Daily interaction and friendships create a context where objectification of others is subverted. The fetishization of commodities and the allure of individual consumerism give way to a sensibility of utility: Collectives need fewer durable goods and involve less waste than households composed of atomized individuals and couples. Automobiles are shared among several people, as are VCR's, which can easily be carried from room to room in the *Wohngemeinschaften*.

For many squatters, the desire (or even need) to live in a collective is more than a whim, it is a vital need so strong that they preferred to remain homeless rather than move into an isolated apartment.

After the eviction of the Lübbenerstrasse, for example, members of the group lived for awhile in tents in Lausitzer Platz even though the December cold was severe. One of them was pregnant, and when she was offered an apartment with a shower by a member of the city government, she declined, saying she wanted to live with the whole group. They were one of the groups that helped occupy the largest squat in eastern Berlin (located at the Brünnenstrasse #7), and it was one of the few squats that included people who had lived in East Berlin before the *Wende*. Comprised of four separate apartment buildings and a large back courtyard, the squat accommodated a wide variety of people. In 1992, tired of being saddled with the chores, the women insisted on having their own building. Despite what could easily have become an acrimonious situation, the group continued to function more as or less as a unit.

Of all the people I met for the first time during my first trip to Berlin after the dissolution of East Germany, Tilman left me with the strongest impression. His father had been a general in the East German army and his mother a ranking member of the Unified Socialist Party (usually referred to as the Communist Party). After the travel ban imposed by the Communists was lifted, he had been to western Germany three times: once to go the occupied houses at the Hafenstrasse in Hamburg, once to an anti-fascist demonstration and finally to Bavaria to "have a look at the mountains." I asked him where he would most like to go now that he could freely travel. After a moment's reflection, he replied, "to El Salvador." Incredulous by now, I asked why. "Because," he calmly continued, "a collective doing political work there could be enormously constructive." For Tilman, living in a squat was a vital need.

The uprooting of the established reality's hold on everyday life should not be envisioned along the lines of an overnight insurrection magically curing all of society's ills. The cradle to grave manipulation of life and increasing regulation of family relations took centuries to occur. Recreating values (or deconstructing corporate culture) will no doubt be a process involving generations. Although supposed to be "liberated areas," squats were not free of internal problems. Some people enforced political conformity and sought to destroy differences. The oft-criticized compulsory dress code (all black) and mandatory political approval of violence against police are two common examples. Uniformity was enforced through a variety of means: defamation, isolation and even physical confrontation. One story told of a squat consisting of two houses with a dilapidated electrical system. The people in the back house received no electricity when the band in the front house hooked up its equipment. After weeks of acrimony, one of the squatters in the back house finally took an ax to the electrical connections leading to the band's working room. No one was severely hurt in the ensuing melee because cool heads prevented the situation from getting out of control.

More serious are instances of male violence reported by Autonomen women in three cities from 1987 to 1989. In Bielefeld, an antifa was named as the man who had raped a woman. In Duisberg, one Autonomen was reported to have raped three different women over two years. As the controversy over what should be done with him raged, the public response of two of his friends was that "Micha in the first place is our comrade." As debate intensified, these same men wrote a leaflet in his defense, telling his accusers: "Stop the shit so we can get on to something else." Needless to say, such attitudes seriously jeopardized the movement's vitality and integrity.

In Düsseldorf in the summer of 1988, a women's group published what became known as the "green leaflet" naming five Autonomen men who had committed actions against women including rapes and physical attacks. One man simply refused to leave a house he had helped to squat so that it could become a squat only for women. Men wrote a variety of responses, none of which dealt with the problem of violence against women. Instead, one man accused the women who wrote the leaflet of using Nazi tactics. Another leaflet parodied the green leaflet by asking for punishment of a woman who gave birth to a son, a Turkish woman who wouldn't burn her scarf, and two lesbians who lived in a

mixed commune. One of the men accused of violence worked in the city's squatted Autonomen center. In a fight with his former lover, he had hit her with a ski pole. He was defended by his group in a statement that said the green leaflet was based on a "classical model of domination. The violence of men was not discussed, criticized and eliminated, but the perpetrators were made into victims. Men--these men--were thrust into social isolation by the publicity (as though men don't do enough to isolate themselves)." In response to the collective's failure to expel this man, five women left the group. For the authors of the green leaflet, "the response of the Autonomen center indicates that in these patterns of violence against women, all the moral pressure and consequences were put on the woman. She has to be responsible for what happens to the guy because of the publicity, but no one felt responsible to confront the men with their acts and the consequences for women."

These examples illustrate the continuing problem of sexism in the movement and indicate how much the Autonomen are a product of the social system they wish to destroy. At the same time, they raise another issue: the need for "centers of dual power" to enact resolutely alternative forums of justice. Without public hearings of all the evidence, it is conceivable that individuals can be unjustly accused without any recourse to establish their innocence. Nor will women victimized by sexist behavior find justice unless the movement develops new ways to enact its "revolutionary dual power." Clearly such a measure is imperative if autonomous alternatives to the existing criminal justice system are to be developed. In the case of a decentralized and militant political formation like the Autonomen, the specific problems and negative dynamics include the short life of collectives where apparently trivial matters (like personality conflicts) develop into substantial problems. At the other extreme, group-think too easily sets in within more stable groups, a dynamic in which individuals are singled out for punishment and irrationally treated. Elitism, self-righteousness and hostility are all German cultural attributes reproduced in the movement. Severe disagreements between anti-imperialists and more locally oriented activists and between action-freaks and counterculturalists often become rancorous and outweigh the positive aspects of any dialogue. Years of militant confrontations also helped produce a paranoia that has isolated the movement and fragmented its membership.

The political distance of Autonomen in the 1990s from the squatters of the early 1980s is one example. Although some old squatters continued to be active, publishing magazines and working in alternative institutions, others had turned against the Autonomen, even publicly attacking them as "new stormtroopers" and giving lectures to the police in which it was claimed the Autonomen were fascists. Legalization, not eviction, was the solution arrived at to defuse the squatters movement a decade ago, and the next generation of activists derided their legal and comfortable houses. Few Autonomen appreciate activists from previous waves of movement activity.

In 1980, the **Taz** (Germany's alternative daily paper) was under severe attack from the government (see chapter 3 above). Its editors were charged with "inciting to riot." Several times, the newspaper was seized by police from kiosks around the country. In 1991, I was with squatters in the Brünnenstrasse (the largest of the new squats), and I showed them a poster from 1981 advertising the **Taz** portraying it as a weapon in the struggle alongside molotovs, rocks and black ski masks. They laughed incredulously. People could scarcely believe that this newspaper, by then little more than a mouthpiece for the realists in the Greens, had once identified itself as part of a radical movement. Their disdain is also illustrated by a story about the resistance at Mainzerstrasse. At the final press conference, a group of squatters appeared wearing nothing but black ski masks. The table around which they stood, nicely set as if for an elegant meal, was the same table used at Kommune 2, the second major political commune in Germany at the end of the 1960s. The table had been "liberated" from the offices of the **Taz**, and after the press conference, it was spirited away to another squatted house. Despite the

apparent cooptation of the Greens and counterinstitutions like the **Taz**, in what other countries do newly created "movement" parties or daily newspapers elicit hostility from a movement for their failure to live up to radical expectations? Where else is there radical disappointment with the apparent failure of counterinstitutions? Disappointment contains within it an element of belief in a promise left unfulfilled, a promise which continues to animate political action.

The distance of the Autonomen from anything resembling a movement capable of sustaining long-term activism is obvious in their failure to actualize their own new values within their groups. In relation to outsiders, additional problems exist. Attacks on expensive automobiles and yuppie restaurants in Kreuzberg are one way to respond to gentrification. By forcibly restricting individual consumer choices, however, this tactic gives the mass media grounds to transmit the message that the Autonomen are against the privacy of individuals and seek to control middle-class people whose upward mobility might allow them a few luxuries. Within the scene, many criticize these attacks as leading the movement to a depoliticized struggle against atomized consumers, not against the system that produces mass consumption as a replacement for community and group membership. In a context where the extreme Right was making significant gains and attacks on the movement were increasing, I find it difficult to fault completely those who attack neo-Nazis and films like *Terror 2000* in which gratuitous violence and sexual objectification reproduce within the movement the very values which it opposes.

No matter how heroic its members, the existence of an oppositional movement does not necessarily mean that a new psychological structure has emerged which stands in contrast to the unconscious structures of the old social order. By themselves, combativeness and a constant willingness to fight, are not revolutionary attributes -- indeed, they are probably the opposite. Even at a moment when the Autonomen were the only public force in Germany directly to oppose the fascist wave of violence which swept across the country in 1992, fights broke out among those who went to Hoyerswerda to stop the pogrom. Internal dangers are all the more real since there are elements to the Autonomen containing within them the seeds of aggression and destruction. "Punk rules," once a popular slogan, has counterparts today in equally absurd ideas: "Germany-all downhill now" and "Fire and Flames." The pure nihilism present to some degree in the movement is expressed in a variety of ways. Indications like the combat boots and black leather jackets worn by many militants can be disregarded as superficial, but equally obvious characteristics of the scene merit attention: a scathing anti-intellectualism, an overt and often unchallenged "male" process of events, and random violent clashes among members of the scene. To put it mildly, the movement often fails to establish peaceful and supportive community, and it also contains a dose of German national pride. Both the Greens and the Autonomen have been widely criticized for focusing too much on the German movement's needs and not enough on the international movement. On these levels, they have not broken with some of the worst dimensions of their cultural tradition.

THE GERMAN PROBLEM

The appearance of the Autonomen as primarily a German movement clouds their international importance. Many commentators of vastly different political persuasions have long called attention to the ways in which German politics are impacted by deeply ingrained cultural forces. The reappearance of elements of indigenous cultures within modern social movements is of far greater importance than is generally realized. Frantz Fanon's analysis of spontaneity made apparent how the extant remnants of tribalism and superstition blocked the revolutionary impulse in Africa. In the German context, is it possible to understand the existence of cultural remnants within the psychological constitution of

Germans? If that is the case, then in the advanced capitalist societies, Fanon's critique of spontaneity might involve understanding and negating psychological remnants like ethnic chauvinism and patriarchy that get unconsciously reproduced within the movement. The German problem is important to my analysis for two reasons: In order to open the issue of the possible applicability of autonomous politics to other contexts, I need to filter out the German dimension. Moreover, the universal species interests upon which autonomous movements at their best act is sometimes hidden by their appearance as a German movement and distorted by that particular cultural prism. To uncover this universal interest, I try to filter the German dimension in the following pages.

Fascism in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s was not merely the dictatorship of the most reactionary wing of the bourgeoisie as Dimitrov and Soviet Marxists used to insist. Nor was it simply the rule of the feudal aristocracies in the twentieth century as Barrington Moore so persuasively demonstrated. Nazi power's roots were in the psychological structures of German everyday life. Strict child-rearing practices emphasizing stern discipline and paternal authority prepared the *führer*'s rise to power, without which no fascist party could have dictated such murderous behavior. Despite heroic resistance by some Germans, so many supported Hitler that outside force was required to liberate Germany from fascism.

German mass psychology was not automatically altered after liberation from the Nazis. On the contrary, Cold War exigencies constrained Allied denazification programs, and shortly after 1945, as ex-Nazi Gestapo agents became Allied employees, no real attempt was made to rework German everyday life. Even today, despite the feminist movement and counterculture, German society suffers from some of the same psycho-social dynamics that helped bring the Nazis to power: the authoritarian family, hatred of foreigners, and a cold, calculating disposition which basks in the unhappiness of others (*Schadenfreude*). *Kinderfeindlichkeit* (hatred of children) continues to be a major social problem, and what can be said about neo-Nazi attacks on disabled people?

All too often, German national identity continues to define realities that have little or nothing to do with national or cultural boundaries. "Typically German" is a phrase whose wide use ranges from commentary on immature male behavior to trivial observations regarding the most mundane actions of everyday life. As a phrase, it means very little since nearly every culture has its stereotypical moments. When used repeatedly to explain so many different dynamics, however, "typically German" is used to assert the existence of a uniquely German character, presumably one which is qualitatively different from other cultures. If not for its deadly historical consequences, that mentality would be worthy of little more than contempt and ridicule. The tragic impact of German chauvinism makes it imperative, however, to examine further the internal beliefs and structure of identity that cause Germans to understand their own behavior as "typically German."

It is not only the far Right which asserts its Germanity (in contrast to its humanity). Unfortunately, references to uniquely Germanic behavior extend to nearly all Germans, even to those, like Günter Grass, who are clearly against German racism. If, as I portray below, German identity is so important even to progressive Germans, then clearly the problem for the whole society is even greater than many people might imagine. Considered by many to be Germany's greatest post-war writer, Grass opposed reunification of the country precisely because he was afraid of its consequences for foreigners and the rest of the world. Yet his analysis of incipient neo-Nazism asserts that their phrase "traitor to the fatherland," when used in conjunction with "rootless cosmopolitan," belongs to the "special vocabulary of German history." This is no casual reference, for in this book and elsewhere, Grass continually uses the term "cultural nation" with "one history and one culture" to refer to Germany. Such an assertion flies in the face of history. In the eighteenth century, there were hundreds of principalities in what is today

called Germany. One estimate placed the number at 200-300 states plus ten times as many smaller entities during the Enlightenment. How can there be one history of these disparate realities, unless Grass seeks to accomplish in mind what Bismarck and his Prussian cohorts were able to accomplish in 1871 through blood and iron (German unity)?

Christa Wolf, the best-known writer in what used to be East Germany and, like Grass, a progressive person clearly opposed to neo-Nazis, used a similar construction of typical German behavior to comment upon the ways East Germany's history and her own role there were being critically reviewed. She complained that in place of:

...an honest, blunt discussion carried out, however, in an atmosphere of empathy, about our personal history in the last few decades, [there is] the good old German inclination for always being right, for thoroughness in reckoning with the 'opponent,' the bigoted demand to fulfill an abstract, rigorous moral code.

Once again, it is German behavior, German thoroughness, and German bigotry which defined the situation. "Always being right," a type of personality which exists in far too many cultures, is not a human condition for Wolf, but a German one. The fact that Grass and Wolf, unquestionably progressive human beings, are the ones making reference to uniquely German behavior is an indication of how widespread the tendency to Germanize human problems is. In their own internal deliberations, members of the autonomous women's movement also referred to how their movement was not spared the "German sickness of friend/foe, black/white thinking, the widespread incapability to discuss differing ideas, and the customary habit of defaming differences." During the Gulf War, Alice Schwarzer (Germany's leading feminist) publicly declared she was proud to be German because the country's new pacifism was superior to the American militarist mentality.

Like other particularistic cultures, Germans tend to regard their history (and destiny) as unique (and of superior significance to that of other nations or cultures). Expressionist painter Kirchner and the *Blaue Reiter* understood themselves as German nationalists. German world maps commonly ascribe old German names to cities that have long since had other names -- as for example, Königsberg. One radical German claimed Left and Right were political categories developed in the course of the German revolution of 1848 rather than the French Revolution of 1789. Even in how the worst aspect of their history is understood, Germans believe in the "uniqueness of the German history of extermination" (*Einzigkeit der deutschen Vernichtungsgeschichte*). American genocide at My Lai or Wounded Knee may not be as neat, orderly, premeditated or calculated as German genocide at Auschwitz, but it is genocide nonetheless -- as were the actions of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, Indonesia in East Timor, and Turkey in Armenia. To consider Germany's genocide during World War II as a special case outweighing all other cases of genocide is to deny the human capacity for genocidal behavior, a denial that fails to mitigate such possibilities in the future. Whether Serbia's "ethnic cleansing," Brazil's ecocidal destruction of rain forest life, or Germany's death factories, the effect of these monstrosities is to kill those defined as "other" and to seize their land and property.

Progressive Germans are capable of arguing for hours that the African slave trade and the genocide of Native Americans, despite their quantitative superiority to the holocaust, qualitatively differ from the latter. Changing the subject, these same progressives will go on at equal length about the uniqueness of the German autonomous movement, the German neo-Nazis, or the German Greens, as if any of these constructions existed purely along national lines. Considering Nazism and its genocide purely a German problem is to end up producing the same effect as that intended by Hitler: Germanization of the cultural universe. Such a mechanical negation of Nazism (not a determinate negation in Hegel's

sense of the word) loses sight of the human dimension of the situation, the human essence of action and the potential for genocide of human beings, who even in our failures and horrors exist as a species -- a dimension of our existence severed and mutilated by assertions of Germanity.

Whether their forests or their fascists, the Nazis romanticize everything German, but all too often, anti-Nazis do the same thing, albeit in a negative rather than a positive fashion. Like Israelis and Japanese, Germans take enormous pride in their uniqueness and exclusivity. Based in their final analysis on blood lines, such constructions of identity serve to obscure the commonality of the human experience. Historically speaking, the German nation-state (the one from Bismarck to Hitler) existed less than seventy-five years. The brevity of Germany's political life helps explain the motivation behind German enthusiasm for their positive political accomplishments (and the current government's comparative lack of legitimacy can be traced to its historically transitory character).

One of the political legacies of German history is that structures of authority within the personalities of German people remain comparatively strong. One of the latest proofs of Germans' addiction to order was publicized in 1993. After an American journalist joked that "order über alles" characterized Germany, five students at the University of Trier constructed a way to determine whether Germans would actually obey "absurd rules." At the main post office in Trier, they hung official-looking signs on telephone booths that read "women only" and "men only" and then watched the reaction. Of 69 telephone users observed, nearly all the women and three-fourths of the men obeyed the instructions, while only one woman and nine men were bold enough to use the phone designated for the opposite sex. On January 28, 1994, students at the University of Münster conducted an experiment to test whether or not German students would allow themselves to be steered into racially segregated entrances to the university's student cafeteria. Holding signs reading "Germans" and "Foreigners" at adjacent doorways, the students found that 95% of their colleagues allowed themselves to be steered into the "correct" entrance.

Such unconscious dimensions to racism and authoritarianism are difficult to measure, but a conscious affinity with Nazi beliefs among West Germans was continually documented in study after government study. One of the more recent studies to document this was conducted in 1979 and held secret for two years (until May 1981), when it was finally given media coverage. The survey claimed that 18% of West Germans felt that "Under Hitler, Germany had it better." The government report went on to say: "A total of 13 per cent of the voters (about 5.5 million people) have an ideologically complete frame of mind, the main supports of which are a national socialist (Nazi) view of history, hatred of foreigners, democracy, and pluralism and an exaggerated devotion to people, fatherland, and family." In 1989, *Der Spiegel* published a comprehensive analysis of Hitler accompanied by the results of a new poll in which they found that only every other German had sympathy for the Jews while a total of 79.9% were mildly to strongly "proud to be German."

These polls may not come as a surprise, but what is astounding is many activists' and militants' unawareness of the deep psychological structure on which the espousal of fascist beliefs depend. When not subject to conscious reflection and their transformation, these patterns of everyday interaction can be **spontaneously** reproduced even within the movement. As the Autonomen developed from the crucible of popular struggles and merged with their cultural counterparts in the youth ghettos, it was often an unprincipled fusion wherein violence and callousness went unchallenged. At the same time, the Protestant ethic so proudly claimed by Max Weber to be at the heart of capitalism continued to be a powerful force on political activists. One could begin by pointing out that the Autonomen black uniform is the same color as that of the Puritans. Even in the movement, puritanical norms are evident. Comparing the German Autonomen to their Polish counterparts (the Orange movement) or to Danish

BZ people, there is a hard edge to the Germans which does not exist in these other contexts.

Even though there are severe problems within the movement, no where else in the political universe of Germany do the desire for a different kind of society and the necessity of building a new way of life coincide. Hope is to be found in the sublime harmony of many activists as well as in their attempts to build a supportive collectivity amid daily anxieties about police and neo-Nazi attacks. Whether or not these marginalized groups survive to live in the kind of society they want, they have to some degree already brought it into existence in their small groups. Whether autonomous movements are able to realize more freedom depends, at least in part, on a protracted transformation of the inner character of everyday life.

NOTES Chapter 5

A grant from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) made it possible for me to travel to Germany in 1993 in order to research directly the resurgence of Nazism and antifascist movement. Additional research was conducted while I was a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Center for European Studies. I would like to thank Susanne Peters, Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz, Victor Wallis and Billy Nessen for their comments on earlier drafts.

1..Stefan Krätke, "Berlin: A Post-Fordist Metropolis?" in *Cities and Regions in the New Europe: The Global-Local Interplay and Spatial Development Strategies*, edited by Mick Dunford and Grigoris Kafkalas (Belhaven Press, 1993) p. 229.

2..See Peter Marcuse, *Missing Marx: A Personal and Political Journal of a Year in East Germany, 1989-1990* (Monthly Review, 1991). Reports of the brutality associated with the resurgence of Nazism left little space in the American media to contemplate the roots of the revival of German fascism -- already a phenomenon which history will record as the scourge of the twentieth century. The explanation most commonly preferred for the popularity of right-wing ideas and actions in Germany was the economic dislocation caused by the global downtown and political uncertainty after the reunification of Germany. According to this perspective, high unemployment and rebelliousness against the ideas of the former communist regime were the forces compelling Germans to attack foreigners. Why should Germans be out of work and have nowhere to live when their government provides anyone crossing the border with a monthly stipend and a place to sleep? While the parameters of this argument are quite true, it fails to answer the question of why it is in Germany -- especially in what used to be West Germany -- rather than in Britain or France that the intensity of attacks on foreigners is so great.

3..See Claus Leggewie, *Die Republikaner: Ein Phantom nimmt Gestalt an* (Rotbuch, 1989); Eike Hennig, *Die Republikaner im Schatten Deutschlands* (Suhrkamp, 1991); Richard Stöss, *Die extreme Rechte in der Bundesrepublik: Entwicklung, Ursachen, Gegenmassnahmen* (Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989); Antifaschistisches Autorenkollektiv, *Drahtzieher im braunen Netz: Der Wiederaufbau der NSDAP* (Edition ID-Archiv, 1992).

4..See Ferdinand Protzman, "Music of Hate Raises the Volume in Germany," **New York Times**, December 2, 1992.

5..A similar discrepancy could also be found in the number of neo-murders reported. The government claimed 3 in 1991 and 17 in 1992. (**The Week in Germany**, February 12, 1993, p. 1) An autonomous anti-fascist group's list with names, dates and places detailed 12 murders in 1991 and 25 in 1992.

6..**New York Times**, November 2, 1992. For a deeper analysis of these groups, see Michael Schmidt, *The New Reich: Violent Extremism in Unified Germany and Beyond* (Pantheon Books, 1993). The 40,000 figure did not include approximately 25,000 members of the Republicans. **Der Spiegel**, June 21, 1993, p. 59.

7.."Reunited Germany: The New Danger," **Searchlight Magazine** (England) January 1995.

8..Taz Feb 23, 1993.

9..**Dokumentation**, Anti-Rassismus-Büro Bremen, April 1992.

10..**Boston Globe**, September 14, 1994.

11..See Stephen Bronner, "The New Right: Reflections on an International Phenomenon," in **New Political Science**, #24-25 *Germany's Identity Crisis* (Spring-Summer, 1993) pp. 87-98.

12..**The Week in Germany**, January 5, 1990, p. 7.

13..Krätke, p. 222.

14..Figures from the AL reported in the **New York Times** (November 15, 1990, p. 8) were 27,000 vacant apartments in eastern Berlin.

15..Stephen Kinzer, "Berlin, Named Seat of Power, Now Wonders If It Has Room," **New York Times**, June 24, 1991.

16..Jonathan Kaufman, "Foreigners Feel Brunt of German Strains," *Boston Globe* (August 27, 1992).

17..When the police deal with the neo-Nazis was made public a year later after the Taz's investigations, the state's interior minister was forced to resign, and its prime minister's aspirations to become Helmut Kohl's running mate in 1994 also came to an end. See Bettina Markmeyer und Jan Lerch, "Polizei bestätigt Pakt von Rostock," **Die Tageszeitung**, February 3, 1993. Also see reports on February 12 in both the **Taz** and the **Frankfurter Rundschau**.

18.."Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania" as reported in the **New York Times**, September 23, 1992: "Gypsies in Romania have been the target of increasingly violent attacks since the revolution that toppled Nicely Ceausescu. Their homes have been burned down and vandalized, they have been beaten by vigilante mobs, and on occasion arrested by police and beaten in police custody, and they have been chased out of one village after another."

.**New York Times**, November 1, 1992.

.**New York Times**, March 1, 1992.

.**Taz**, February 8, 1993.

.**New York Times**, January 31, 1993.

Lea Rosh, "Account of Conditions, Fall 1992," in *The Future of German Democracy* edited by Robert Livingston and Volkmar Sander (Continuum Books, 1993) pp. 109-110.

.**Boston Globe**, March 16, 1994.

.Among many sources of this observation, see Dietrich Staritz, *Sozialismus in einem halben Land* (Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1976).

.**New York Times**, August 27, 1993.

.**New York Times**, August 1, 1993.

.United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

.Stephen Kinzer, "A Few Bits of Nazi Past Still Linger," **New York Times**, May 28, 1995.

.By 1995, 11 right-wing extremist organizations had been banned. **Der Spiegel**, August 21, 1995, p. 75-6.

.An extraordinarily interesting book on Afro-Germans is *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out* edited by May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye and Dagmar Schultz (University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

.Descendants of Germans living outside Germany are automatically entitled to citizenship. In both 1989 and 1990, more than 400,000 such persons emigrated to Germany, and from 1991 to 1995, about 200,000 more did so each year. **The Week in Germany**, September 22, 1995, p. 8.

.Assuming this thesis is correct, what can be done to ameliorate this problem? In a phrase, the sharpness of a German identity based on blood-line must be blurred. That is one compelling reason why the Bonn government should grant citizenship to millions of foreigners born in Germany (as Ignatz Bubis, leader of Germany's Jewish community recently proposed) as well as to those who have lived and worked in Germany for decades. At present, even with some reforms in place, these individuals have

little chance of becoming citizens and rely on the charity of the government for protection. Guaranteeing Turkish-Germans citizenship would not only provide them security, but it would forever destroy the idea of a biologically-based German identity, thereby undermining the pernicious political effects of ethnic pride.

Such a measure would clearly communicate the commitment of the national government never again to sanction German chauvinism. Without it, stemming the flow of immigration as the parliament has done, will only feed the appetite of the Right. France and Britain have already granted citizenship to millions of immigrants, yet the prospect of a similar development in Germany remains highly unlikely. Appreciation for difference and multiculturalism is accelerating as a global imperative, and Germans should get in step with the rest of the world.

.**New York Times**, November 9, 1992.

.On May 13, 1994, a hundred neo-Nazis assaulted five African students in Magdeburg, stabbing two and beating all badly. The police did not intervene until the Autonomen arrived and began beating up the neo-Nazis.

.Projectgruppe, *Antifa: Diskussionen und Tips aus der antifaschistischen Praxis* (Edition ID-Archiv, 1994).

.See *Verfassungsschutzbericht* (1989) p. 72.

.See Klaus Farin und Eberhard Seidel-Pielen, *Krieg in den Städten: Jugendgangs in Deutschland* (Rotbuch, 1992).

.Besides interviews with some of the participants, the source for much of this section is *Dokumentation zur Mainzerstrasse 12-14 November '90: Presse, Flugblätter, Presseerklärungen, Auslands presse, Soli-Aktionen* (Ermittlungsausschuss im Mehringhof, 1990).

.excerpted from a letter by Jeremy Warren to Billy Nessen.

.The ownership of more than 150,000 properties--to say nothing of factories and farmlands--in what used to be East Germany was still unresolved. More than 100,000 people filed applications claiming that they were the rightful owners of private property nationalized by the Communists. In the neighborhoods of Berlin where the squats were, 80% of the buildings were expected to be reprivatized.

.Marc Fisher, "Anarchists Face Down Berlin Police," **Washington Post**, November 14, 1990.

.Ralph Geisenhanslüke, "Kreuzberger Mächte," **Die Zeit**, March 26, 1993, p. 21.

.**Die Zeit**, March 26, 1993, p. 21

.Bernd Nitzschke, "Terror 2000: Schlingensiefs Film, Berliner 'Autonome' und andere Hassprediger," **Die Zeit**, March 12, 1993.

.in **Interim**, #226, February 4, 1993.

.In the United States as well, the mass media (Including much of the so-called alternative press) systematically ignore, denigrate or glorify the Autonomen. In 1989, **Utne Reader** inaccurately blamed the Autonomen for hurting the Greens by influencing them "to advocate legalization of sex of children if the children consented." See Monika Beuerlein, "Germany's Radical Counterculture: Are they revolutionary heroes or an albatross for other activists?" (July/August, 1989) pp. 30-1. **Utne** printed Beuerlein's piece as a response to an article Rodolfo Torres and I wrote for **Z** magazine. Although she erred on many factual points, **Utne** refused to print our rejoinder. At the Greens' state program convention in North Rhine-Westphalia, a small group of gays had inserted such a phrase. See Markovits and Gorski, p. 210. To characterize the Autonomen on the basis of parliamentary dynamics within the Greens is to seriously misstate the situation. Moreover Beuerlein characterized Kreuzberg, the

Hafenstrasse, Christiania and other autonomous zones as having an "atmosphere of decay" and "ramshackle," where bars "not identified by signs play 'progressive' music..." For **Utne** to give space to such middle-class sentiments was a projection of that magazine's own values, embedded in its profitable structure and private ownership. The commercialization of the counterculture is contested in Germany. In the U.S. it has proceeded so far that no one seems to comment on it.

.Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Beacon Press, 1967).

.T.H. Tetens, *The New Germany and the Old Nazis* (Random House, 1961); *Brown Book: War and Nazi Criminals in West Germany* (Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1966).

.Günter Grass, *Two States -- One Nation?* (Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1990).

.Eugene Weber, The Western Tradition--The Enlightenment. Another estimate was more than 300 political entities in 1648. See Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (Meridian Books, 1982).

.In the United States, the term "outside agitator" was used to impugn Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights activists who travelled the country to help create insurgent movements. If one were to assert that the term belongs to the special vocabulary of U.S. history, one would be right semantically but substantively wrong. For all intents and purposes, "rootless cosmopolitan" and "outside agitator" are culturally equivalent, and the list of repressive governments who blame popular resistance on outsiders would go on at some length. One need only mention de Gaulle's attempt to blame the uprising of May 1968 on Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a German-born Jew. "Traitor to the fatherland" has its U.S. counterpart, at least in the 1960s context, in being labelled a "communist." No American would use "fatherland" to describe the U.S., but there are plenty with fanatical hatred of those they define as "other."

Like Germany, the U.S. has its own share of government and media collaboration with violence against those defined as "other." Witness the case of Baruch Goldstein, the emigre from Brooklyn who massacred thirty Palestinians at prayer in Hebron. In the two weeks after the slaughter, not once did the *Boston Globe* refer to him as a "terrorist." He was a settler, attacker or gunman in 25 out of 30 instances he was mentioned while in the same period of time, the *Globe* used phrases like "Arab terrorist attacks" to portray Palestinian violence. *The New York Times* ran a feature story on Goldstein's youth, and at the same time, one of the Left's leading personalities, a man who had advocated using nuclear weapons against Iraq, toured the country speaking out against anti-Semitism on the Left. While this issue is important (in no small way because of the patronizing way the Left deals with Jews), it is simultaneously a sad commentary on the state of the opposition movement in a country which has systematically produced men like Baruch Goldstein ever since the days of Lord Jeffrey Amherst.

.As quoted from "I Did Not Imagine That I Lived in Truth," by Todd Gitlin, **New York Times Book Review**, April 4, 1993, p. 29

.**Emma Sonderband: Zwanzig Jahre Frauenbewegung**, p. 80.

.See the discussion in Markovits and Gorski, pp. 136-8.

.Robert Hughes, *Shock of the New* (Knopf, 1991).

.*Feuer und Flamme* 2, p. 53.

.Translations of original documents of the controversy about the Holocaust in Germany are contained in *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?* James Knowlton and Truett Cates, translators (Humanities Press, 1993).

.We in the U.S. have contemporary racists and neo-Nazis as well, and they are not fawning sycophants

who worship German fascists. Indeed, at least one American racist from the KKK travelled to Germany to help organize skinheads in 1991, and according to a German television reporter, he was looked on like a guru by young Germans. American neo-Nazis regularly provide funds to their German allies, and Americans do much of the printing for the German Right. Between 1988 and 1993, Klanwatch claims that neo-Nazi skinheads, organized in 160 groups in over 30 states in the U.S., were responsible for 25 murders.

- .**The Week in Germany**, April 16, 1993, p. 7.
- .**Die Zeit** (English edition), June 24, 1994, p. 7.
- .**Der Spiegel** #15 (1989) pp. 150, 157.