

# Red Army Faction<sup>1</sup>

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*"Baader-Meinhof" redirects here. For other uses, see Baader-Meinhof (disambiguation).*

*This article is about the German militant group. For Japanese Red Army/Anti-Imperialist International Brigade, see Japanese Red Army.*

## Red Army Faction



Later design of the RAF's insignia showing a red star and MP5

**Dates of operation** 1970–1998

**Motives** Armed resistance and proletarian revolution

**Active region(s)** West Germany

**Ideology** Marxism–Leninism  
New left

**Major actions** Numerous bombings and assassinations

**Notable attacks** West German embassy siege, German Autumn

**Status** Final action and confrontations in 1993. Apparently officially disbanded on 20 April 1998.

<sup>1</sup> ที่มา [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_Army\\_Faction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Army_Faction) เข้าถึงวันที่ 30 ธันวาคม 2554

The Red Army Faction (German: *Rote Armee Fraktion*), shortened to RAF and in its early stages commonly known as Baader-Meinhof Group, was one of post-World War II Germany's most violent and prominent left-wing terror groups. The RAF described itself as a communist and anti-imperialist "urban guerrilla" group engaged in armed resistance against what they deemed to be a fascist state. The RAF was founded in 1970 by Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Horst Mahler, and Ulrike Meinhof.

The Red Army Faction existed from 1970 to 1998, committing numerous operations, especially in the autumn of 1977, which led to a national crisis that became known as "German Autumn". It was held responsible for thirty-four deaths, including many secondary targets, such as chauffeurs and bodyguards, and many injuries in its almost thirty years of activity. Although more well-known, the RAF conducted fewer attacks than the Revolutionary Cells (RZ), which is held responsible for 296 bomb attacks, arson and other attacks between 1973 and 1995.<sup>[1]</sup>

The group always called itself the "Rote Armee Fraktion". The terms "Baader-Meinhof Gang" and "Baader-Meinhof Group" or just "Baader-Meinhof" are sometimes used as nicknames for the organization. RAF never used these terms for themselves, but the German media used them to avoid legitimizing the movement as an actual political organisation.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Although Meinhof was not considered to be a leader of the RAF at any time, her involvement in Baader's escape from jail in 1970 and her well-known status as a German journalist led to her name becoming attached to it.<sup>[2]</sup> There were three successive incarnations of the organization, the "first generation" which consisted of Baader and his associates, the "second generation" RAF, which operated in the mid to late 1970s after several former members of the Socialist Patients' Collective joined, and the "third generation" RAF, which existed in the 1980s and 1990s.

On 20 April 1998, an eight-page typewritten letter in German was faxed to the Reuters news agency, signed "RAF" with the machine-gun red star, declaring that the group had dissolved.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Background

The Red Army Faction's Urban Guerrilla Concept is not based on an optimistic view of the prevailing circumstances in the Federal Republic and West Berlin.

—*The Urban Guerrilla Concept* authored by RAF co-founder Ulrike Meinhof (April 1971)

The origins of the group can be traced back to the student protest movement in West Germany. Industrialised nations in late 1960s experienced social upheavals related to the maturing of the baby boomers born after World War II, the Cold War, and the end of colonialism. Newly-found youth identity and issues such as racism, women's liberation and anti-imperialism were at the forefront of left-wing politics.

In West Germany, 1966 saw the emergence of the first Grand Coalition between the two main parties, the SPD and CDU, under chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger. With ninety-five percent of the Bundestag controlled by the coalition, an Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (APO) was formed with the intent of generating protest and political activity outside of government.<sup>[4]</sup>

Many young people were alienated from both their parents and the institutions of state. The historical legacy of Nazism drove a wedge between the generations and increased suspicion of authoritarian structures in society (some analysts see the same occurring in Italy, giving rise to "Brigate Rosse" or Red Brigades).<sup>[5]</sup>

In West Germany there was anger among leftist youth at perceived failures in the post-war denazification in West and East Germany, which was seen as a failure or as ineffective,<sup>[6]</sup> as former (actual and supposed) Nazis held positions in government and economy.<sup>[7]</sup> The Communist Party of Germany had been outlawed since 1956. Elected and unelected government positions down to the local level were often occupied by ex-Nazis.<sup>[7]</sup> Konrad Adenauer, the first Federal Republic chancellor had even kept on the Nazi chancellery secretary, Hans Globke.

The conservative media were considered biased by the radicals as they were owned and controlled by conservatives such as Axel Springer, who was implacably opposed to student radicalism. The late 1960s saw the emergence of the Grand Coalition between the two main parties, the SPD and CDU with Kurt Georg Kiesinger, a former Nazi Party member as chancellor. This horrified many on the left and was viewed as monolithic, political marriage of convenience with pro-NATO, pro-capitalist collusion on the part of the social democratic SPD. In 1972 a law was passed, the Radikalenerlass, which banned radicals or those with a 'questionable' political persuasion from public sector jobs.<sup>[8]</sup>

Some used the supposed association of society with Nazism as an argument against any peaceful approaches:

They'll kill us all. You know what kind of pigs we're up against. This is the Auschwitz generation. You can't argue with people who made Auschwitz. They have weapons and we haven't. We must arm ourselves!

—Gudrun Ensslin speaking after the death of Benno Ohnesorg.<sup>[9]</sup>

The radicalized were, like many in the New Left, influenced by:

- Sociological developments, pressure within the educational system in and outside Europe and the U.S. together with the background of counter-cultural movements.
- The writings of Mao Zedong adapted to Western European conditions.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>
- Post-war writings on class society and empire as well as contemporary Marxist critiques from many revolutionaries such as Franz Fanon, Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara as well as early Autonomism.
- Philosophers associated with the Frankfurt school (Jürgen Habermas, Herbert Marcuse, and Oskar Negt in particular<sup>[10]</sup>) and associated Marxian philosophers.<sup>[11]</sup>

RAF founder Ulrike Meinhof had a long history in the Communist Party. Holger Meins had studied film and was a veteran of the Berlin revolt; his short feature *How To Produce A Molotov Cocktail* had been seen by huge audiences. Jan Carl Raspe had lived at the Kommune 2; Horst Mahler had been an established lawyer, but was also at the center of the anti-Springer revolt from the beginning. From their own personal experiences and assessments of the socio-economic situation they soon became more specifically influenced by Leninism and Maoism, calling themselves 'Marxist-Leninist' though they effectively added to or updated this ideological tradition. A contemporaneous critique of the Red Army Faction's view of the state, published in a pirate edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, ascribed to it 'state-fetishism' – an ideologically obsessive misreading of bourgeois dynamics and the nature and role of the state in post-WWII societies, including West Germany.<sup>[12]</sup>

It is claimed that property destruction during the Watts Riots in the United States in 1965 influenced the practical and ideological approach of the RAF founders as well as some of those in Situationist circles.<sup>[13]</sup>

The writings of Antonio Gramsci<sup>[14]</sup> and Herbert Marcuse<sup>[15]</sup> were drawn upon. Gramsci wrote on power, cultural and ideological conflicts in society and institutions—real-time class struggles playing out in rapidly developing industrial nation states through interlinked areas of political behaviour, Marcuse on coercion and hegemony in that cultural indoctrination and ideological manipulation through the means of communication ("repressive tolerance") dispensed with the need for complete brute force in modern 'liberal democracies'. His *One-Dimensional Man* was addressed to the restive students of the sixties. Marcuse argued that only marginal groups of students and poor alienated workers could effectively resist the system. Both Gramsci and Marcuse came to the conclusion that the ideological underpinnings and

the 'superstructure' of society was vitally important in the understanding of class control (and acquiescence). This could perhaps be seen as an extension of Marx's work as he did not cover this area in detail. *Das Kapital*, his mainly economic work, was meant to be one of a series of books which would have included one on society and one on the state,<sup>[16]</sup> but his death prevented fulfilment of this.

Many of the radicals felt that Germany's lawmakers were continuing authoritarian policies and the public's apparent acquiescence was seen as a continuation of the indoctrination the Nazis had pioneered in society (Volksgemeinschaft). The Federal Republic was exporting arms to African dictatorships, which was seen as supporting the war in Southeast Asia and engineering the remilitarization of Germany with the U.S.-led entrenchment against the Warsaw Pact nations.

Ongoing events further catalyzed the situation. Protests turned into riots on 2 June 1967, when Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, visited West Berlin. There were protesters but also hundreds of supporters of the Shah, as well as a group of fake supporters armed with wooden staves, there to disturb the normal course of the visit. These extremists beat the protesters. After a day of angry protests by exiled Iranian radical marxists, a group widely supported by German students, the Shah visited the Berlin Opera, where a crowd of German student protesters gathered. During the opera house demonstrations, German student Benno Ohnesorg was shot in the head by a police officer while attending his first protest rally. The officer, Karl-Heinz Kurras, was acquitted in a subsequent trial. It has now been discovered that this officer had been a member of the West Berlin communist party *SEW* and had also worked for the Stasi.<sup>[17]</sup>

Along with perceptions of state and police brutality, and widespread opposition to the Vietnam War, Ohnesorg's death galvanised many young Germans, and became a rallying point for the West German New Left. The Berlin Movement 2 June, a militant-Anarchist group, later took its name to honour the date of Ohnesorg's death.

In the spring of 1968 Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader, joined by Thorwald Proll and Horst Söhnlein, set fire to two department stores in Frankfurt on 2 April as a protest against the Vietnam war. They were arrested two days later.

On 11 April 1968 Rudi Dutschke, a leading spokesman for protesting students, was shot in the head in an assassination attempt by the right-wing extremist Josef Bachmann. Although badly injured, Dutschke returned to political activism with the German Green Party before his death in a bathtub in 1979, as a consequence of his injuries.

Axel Springer's populist newspaper *Bild-Zeitung*, which had headlines such as "Stop Dutschke now!", was accused of being the chief culprit for inciting the shooting. Meinhof commented: "If one sets a car on fire, that is a criminal offence. If one sets hundreds of cars on fire, that is political action."<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Formation of the RAF

World War II was only twenty years earlier. Those in charge of the police, the schools, the government — they were the same people who'd been in charge under Nazism. The chancellor, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, had been a Nazi. People started discussing this only in the 60's. We were the first generation since the war, and we were asking our parents questions. Due to the Nazi past, everything bad was compared to the Third Reich. If you heard about police brutality, that was said to be just like the SS. The moment you see your own country as the continuation of a fascist state, you give yourself permission to do almost anything against it. You see your action as the resistance that your parents did not put up.

— Stefan Aust, author of *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex*<sup>[18]</sup>

All four of the defendants charged with arson and endangering human life were convicted, for which they were sentenced to three years in prison. In June 1969, however, they were temporarily paroled under an amnesty for political prisoners, but in November of that year, the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) demanded that they return to custody. Only Horst Söhnlein complied with the order; the rest went underground and made their way to France, where they stayed for a time in a house owned by prominent French journalist and revolutionary, Régis Debray, famous for his friendship with Che Guevara and the *focus* theory of guerrilla warfare. Eventually they made their way to Italy, where the lawyer Mahler visited them and encouraged them to return to Germany with him to form an underground guerilla group.

The Red Army Faction was formed with the intention of complementing the plethora of revolutionary and radical groups across West Germany and Europe, as a more class conscious and determined force compared with some of its contemporaries. The members and supporters were already associated with the 'Revolutionary Cells' and Movement 2 June as well as radical currents and phenomena such as the Socialist Patients' Collective, Kommune 1 and the Situationists.

Baader was arrested again in April 1970, but on 14 May 1970 he was freed by Meinhof and others. Baader, Ensslin, Mahler, and Meinhof then went to Jordan, where they trained in the West Bank and Gaza with Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) guerrillas<sup>[5]</sup> and looked to the Palestinian cause for inspiration and guidance. But RAF organisation and

outlook were also partly modeled on the Uruguayan Tupamaros movement, which had developed as an urban resistance movement, effectively inverting Che Guevara's Mao-like concept of a peasant or rural-based guerrilla war and instead situating the struggle in the metropole or cities.

Many members of the RAF operated through a single contact or only knew others by their codenames. Actions were carried out by active units called 'commandos', with trained members being supplied by a quartermaster in order to carry out their mission. For more long-term or core cadre members, isolated cell-like organisation was absent or took on a more flexible form.

In 1969 the Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella published his *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*.<sup>[19]</sup> He described the urban guerrilla as:

...a person who fights the military dictatorship with weapons, using unconventional methods. ... The urban guerrilla follows a political goal, and only attacks the government, big businesses, and foreign imperialists.

The importance of small arms training, sabotage, expropriation, and a substantial safehouse/support base among the urban population was stressed in Marighella's guide. This publication was an antecedent to Meinhof's 'The Urban Guerrilla Concept' and has subsequently influenced many guerrilla and insurgent groups around the globe.<sup>[20]</sup> Although some of the Red Army Faction's supporters and operatives could be described as having an anarchist or libertarian communist slant, the group's leading members professed a largely Marxist-Leninist ideology. That said, they shied away from overt collaboration with communist states, although RAF members did receive intermittent support and sanctuary over the border in East Germany.

### Anti-imperialism and public support

The Baader-Meinhof Gang drew a measure of support that violent leftists in the United States, like the Weather Underground, never enjoyed. A poll at the time showed that a quarter of West Germans under forty felt sympathy for the gang and one-tenth said they would hide a gang member from the police. Prominent intellectuals spoke up for the gang's righteousness (as) Germany even into the 1970s was still a guilt-ridden society. When the gang started robbing banks, newscasts compared its members to Bonnie and Clyde. (Andreas) Baader, a charismatic, spoiled psychopath, indulged in the imagery, telling people that his favourite movies were *Bonnie and Clyde*, which had recently come out, and *The Battle of Algiers*. The pop poster of Che Guevara hung on his wall, (while) he paid a designer to make a Red Army Faction logo, a drawing of a machine gun against a red star."

— Stefan Aust, author of *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex*<sup>[18]</sup>

When they returned to West Germany, they began what they called an "anti-imperialistic struggle", with bank robberies to raise money and bomb attacks against U.S. military facilities, German police stations, and buildings belonging to the Axel Springer press empire. In 1970, a manifesto authored by Meinhof used the name "RAF" and the red star logo with a Heckler & Koch MP5 submachine gun for the first time.<sup>[21]</sup>

Despite killing 34 people, Baader-Meinhof garnered a degree of support from the West German population. The group of militants began to be accepted, if not always admired, by "guilt-ridden liberals", who saw its panache as a countercultural critique of West Germany's "boring bourgeois life" and who resented their nation's association with the American war in Vietnam.<sup>[22]</sup> Baader-Meinhof seized on this sentiment and carefully cultivated an outlaw image, wholesaling the ideal of authentically acting out one's impulses, in order to break through "the fascism of convention", just as its heroes abroad like Che Guevara supposedly "broke through the iron wall of America imperialism."<sup>[22]</sup> Drawing on its New Left counterparts in the United States, the group even began to borrow such phrases as "burn baby burn," "right on," and "off the pigs".<sup>[22]</sup>

After an intense manhunt, Baader, Ensslin, Meinhof, Holger Meins, and Jan-Carl Raspe were eventually caught and arrested in June 1972.

### Custody and the Stammheim trial

#### Stammheim Prison

After the arrest of the protagonists of the first generation of the RAF, they were held in solitary confinement in the newly-constructed high security Stammheim Prison in the north of Stuttgart. When Ensslin devised an "info system" using aliases for each member, the four prisoners were able to communicate again, circulating letters with the help of their defence counsels.

To protest against their treatment by authorities, they went on several coordinated hunger strikes; eventually, they were force-fed. Holger Meins died of self-induced starvation on 9 November 1974. After public protests, their conditions were somewhat improved by the authorities.

The so-called second generation of the RAF emerged at the time, consisting of sympathizers independent of the inmates. This became clear when, on 27 February 1975, Peter Lorenz, the CDU candidate for mayor of Berlin, was kidnapped by the Movement 2 June (allied to the RAF) as part of pressure to secure the release of

several other detainees. Since none of these were on trial for murder, the state agreed, and those inmates (and later Lorenz himself) were released.

On 24 April 1975, the West German embassy in Stockholm was seized by members of the RAF; two of the hostages were murdered as the German government under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt refused to give in to their demands. Two of the hostage-takers died from injuries they suffered when the explosives they planted detonated later that night.

On 21 May 1975, the Stammheim trial of Baader, Ensslin, Meinhof, and Raspe began, named after the district in Stuttgart where it took place. The Bundestag had earlier changed the Code of Criminal Procedure so that several of the attorneys who were accused of serving as links between the inmates and the RAF's second generation could be excluded.

On 9 May 1976, Ulrike Meinhof was found dead in her cell, hanging from a rope made from jail towels. An investigation concluded that she had hanged herself, a result hotly contested at the time, triggering a plethora of conspiracy theories. Other theories suggest that she took her life because she was being ostracized by the rest of the group.

During the trial, more attacks took place. One of these was on 7 April 1977, when Federal Prosecutor Siegfried Buback, his driver, and his bodyguard were shot and killed by two RAF members while waiting at a red traffic light.

Eventually, on 28 April 1977, the trial's 192nd day, the three remaining defendants were convicted of several murders, more attempted murders, and of forming a terrorist organization; they were sentenced to life imprisonment.

## German Autumn

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Main article: German Autumn

On 30 July 1977, Jürgen Ponto, the head of Dresdner Bank, was shot and killed in front of his house in Oberursel in a botched kidnapping. Those involved were Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Christian Klar, and Susanne Albrecht, the last being the sister of Ponto's goddaughter.

Following the convictions, Hanns Martin Schleyer, a former officer of the SS and NSDAP member who was then President of the German Employers' Association (and thus one of the most powerful industrialists in West Germany) was abducted in a violent kidnapping. It has been said often that Schleyer's convoy was stopped by one of the group (Sieglinde Hofmann) pushing a pram into the road where it was to pass by. However, on 5 September 1977, Schleyer's car was in fact stopped by the kidnappers reversing a car into the path of Schleyer's vehicle, causing the Mercedes he was being driven in to crash. Once the convoy was stopped, five masked assailants immediately shot and killed the three policemen and the driver and took Schleyer hostage.

A letter then arrived with the Federal Government, demanding the release of eleven detainees, including those from Stammheim. A crisis committee was formed in Bonn, headed by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, which, instead of acceding, resolved to employ delaying tactics to give the police time to discover Schleyer's location. At the same time, a total communication ban was imposed on the prison inmates, who were now allowed visits only from government officials and the prison chaplain.

The crisis dragged on for more than a month, while the *Bundeskriminalamt* carried out its biggest investigation to date. Matters escalated when, on 13 October 1977, Lufthansa Flight 181 from Palma de Mallorca to Frankfurt was hijacked. A group of four Arabs took control of the plane (named *Landshut*). The leader introduced himself to the passengers as "Captain Mahmud" who would be later identified as Zohair Youssef Akache. When the plane landed in Rome for refuelling, he issued the same demands as the Schleyer kidnappers, plus the release of two Palestinians held in Turkey and payment of US\$15 million.

The Bonn crisis team again decided not to give in. The plane flew on via Larnaca to Dubai, and then to Aden, where flight captain Jürgen Schumann, whom the hijackers deemed not cooperative enough, was brought before an improvised "revolutionary tribunal" and executed on 16 October. His body was dumped on the runway. The aircraft again took off, flown by the co-pilot Jürgen Vietor, this time headed for Mogadishu, Somalia.

A high-risk rescue operation was led by Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, then undersecretary in the chancellor's office, who had secretly been flown in from Bonn. At five past midnight (CET) on 18 October, the plane was stormed in a seven-minute assault by the GSG 9, an elite unit of the German federal police. All four hijackers were shot; three of them died on the spot. Not one passenger was seriously hurt and Wischnewski was able to phone Schmidt and tell the Bonn crisis team that the operation had been a success.

Half an hour later, German radio broadcast the news of the rescue, to which the Stammheim inmates listened on their radios. In the course of the night, Baader was found dead with a gunshot wound in the back of his head and Ensslin was found hanged in her cell; Raspe died in the hospital the next day from a gunshot wound to the head. Irmgard Möller, who had several stab wounds in the chest, survived and was released from prison in 1994.

Burial site of Baader, Raspe and Ensslin.

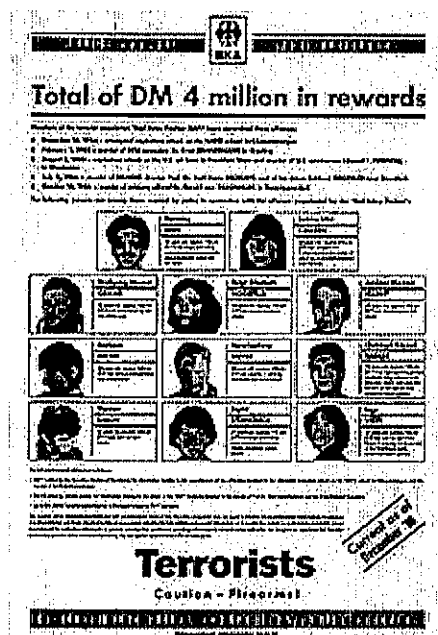
The official inquiry concluded that this was a collective suicide, but again conspiracy theories abounded. However, none of these theories were ever brought forward by the RAF itself. Some have questioned how Baader managed to obtain a gun in the high-security prison wing specially constructed for the first generation RAF members. Also, only a total commitment to her cause could have allowed Möller to have herself inflicted the four stab wounds found near her heart. However, independent investigations showed that the inmates' lawyers were able to smuggle in weapons and equipment in spite of the high security. Möller claims that it was actually an extrajudicial killing, orchestrated by the German government, in response to Red Army Faction demands that the prisoners be released.

On 18 October 1977, Hanns-Martin Schleyer was shot to death by his captors en route to Mulhouse, France. The next day, on 19 October, Schleyer's kidnappers announced that he had been "executed" and pinpointed his location. His body was recovered later that day in the trunk of a green Audi 100 on the rue Charles Péguy. The French newspaper *Libération* received a letter declaring:

After 43 days we have ended Hanns-Martin Schleyer's pitiful and corrupt existence... His death is meaningless to our pain and our rage... The struggle has only begun. Freedom through armed, anti-imperialist struggle.

The events in the autumn of 1977, possibly the biggest criminal and political showdown that Germany has experienced since the end of World War II, are frequently referred to as *Der Deutsche Herbst* ("German Autumn").

## The RAF since the 1980s



## Wanted poster from 1986

The dissolution of the Soviet Union was a serious blow to left-wing groups, but well into the 1990s attacks were still being committed under the name "RAF". Among these were the killing of CEO of MTU Aero Engines, a German engineering company, Ernst Zimmermann; another bombing at the US Air Force's Rhein-Main Air Base (near Frankfurt), which targeted the base commander and killed two bystanders; the car bomb attack that killed Siemens executive Karl-Heinz Beckurts and his driver; and the shooting of Gerold von Braunmühl, a leading official at Germany's foreign ministry. On 30 November 1989, Deutsche Bank chairman Alfred Herrhausen was killed with a highly complex bomb when his car triggered a photo sensor, in Bad Homburg. On 1 April 1991, Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, leader of the government *Treuhand* organization responsible for the privatization of the East German state economy, was shot dead. The assassins of Zimmermann, von Braunmühl, Herrhausen and Rohwedder were never reliably identified .

After German reunification in 1990, it was confirmed that the RAF had received financial and logistic support from the Stasi, the security and intelligence organization of East Germany, which had given several members shelter and new identities. This was already generally suspected at the time.<sup>[23]</sup>

In 1992, the German government assessed that the RAF's main field of engagement now was missions to release former RAF-members. To weaken the organization further the government declared that some RAF inmates would be released if the RAF refrained from violent attacks in the future. Subsequently the RAF announced their intention to "de-escalate" and refrain from significant activity.

The last action taken by the RAF took place in 1993 with a bombing of a newly built prison in Weiterstadt by overcoming the officers on duty and planting explosives. Although no one was seriously injured this operation caused property damage amounting to 123 million German Marks (over 50 million euros).

The last big action against the RAF took place on 27 June 1993. A *Verfassungsschutz* (internal secret service) agent named Klaus Steinmetz had infiltrated the RAF. As a result Birgit Hogefeld and Wolfgang Grams were to be arrested in Bad Kleinen. Grams and GSG 9 officer Michael Newrzella died during the mission. While it was initially concluded that Grams committed suicide, others claimed his death was in revenge for Newrzella's. Two eyewitness accounts supported the claims of an execution-style murder. However, an investigation headed by the Attorney General failed to substantiate such claims. Due to a number of operational mistakes involving the various police services, German Minister of the Interior Rudolf Seiters took responsibility and resigned from his post.

On 20 April 1998, an eight-page typewritten letter in German was faxed to the Reuters news agency, signed "RAF" with the machine-gun red star, declaring the group dissolved:

Vor fast 28 Jahren, am 14. Mai 1970, entstand in einer Befreiungsaktion die RAF. Heute beenden wir dieses Projekt. Die Stadtguerilla in Form der RAF ist nun Geschichte. (Almost 28 years ago, on 14 May 1970, the RAF arose in a campaign of liberation. Today we end this project. The urban guerrilla in the shape of the RAF is now history).<sup>[3]</sup>

Horst Mahler has crossed the lines to the far right and is a Holocaust denier.<sup>[24]</sup> He is an anti-semitic and in 2005 was sentenced to 6 years in prison for incitement to racial hatred.<sup>[25]</sup> He is on record as saying that his beliefs have not changed: *Der Feind ist der Gleiche* (The enemy is the same).<sup>[26]</sup>

In 2007, amidst widespread media controversy, the German president Horst Köhler had considered pardoning RAF member Christian Klar, who filed a pardon application several years ago, but on 7 May 2007 this was denied. However, on 24 November 2008, parole was granted.<sup>[27]</sup> RAF member Brigitte Mohnhaupt was granted a release on a five year parole by a German court on 12 February 2007 and Eva Haule was released 17 August 2007.

## Name

### *Faction versus Fraktion*

The name was inspired by that of the Japanese Red Army, a Japanese leftist paramilitary group. The usual translation into English is the Red Army *Faction*; however, the founders wanted it to reflect what they saw as not so much an orthodox political faction or splinter group but an embryonic militant unit or set of "groupuscules" that was embedded in or part of a wider communist workers' movement.<sup>[28]</sup> The abbreviation RAF was also a gibe at fascists and at the right, intended to recall the aerial bombing of Germany by the Royal Air Force.<sup>[29]</sup>

### RAF versus Baader-Meinhof

The group always called itself the *Rote Armee Fraktion*, never the Baader-Meinhof Group or Gang. The name correctly refers to all incarnations of the organization: the "first generation" RAF, which consisted of Baader and his associates, the "second generation" RAF, and the "third generation" RAF, which existed in the 1980s and 90s.

The terms "Baader-Meinhof Gang" and "Baader-Meinhof Group" were first used by the media and the organization was generally known by these during its first generation, and applies only until Baader's death in 1977.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The organization never used these terms for themselves, but the German media used them to avoid legitimizing the movement. Although Meinhof was not considered to be a leader of the gang at any time, her involvement in Baader's escape from jail in 1970 led to her name becoming attached to it.<sup>[2]</sup>

### List of assaults attributed to the RAF

See also: Members of the Red Army Faction

Date	Place	Action	Remarks	Photo
22 October 1971	Hamburg	Police officer killed	RAF members Irmgard Möller and Gerhard Müller attempted to rescue Margrit Schiller who was being arrested by the police by engaging in a shootout. <sup>[30]</sup> Police sergeant Heinz Lemke was shot in	

			the foot, while Sergeant Norbert Schmid, 33, was killed, becoming the first murder to be attributed to the RAF. <sup>[31]</sup>
22 December 1971	Kaiserslautern	Police officer killed	German Police officer Herbert Schoner, 32, was shot by members of the RAF in a bank robbery. The four militants escaped with 134,000 Deutsche Marks.
11 May 1972	Frankfurt am Main	Bombing of US barracks	US Officer Paul A. Bloomquist dead, 13 wounded.
12 May 1972	Augsburg and Munich	Bombing of a police station in Augsburg and the Bavarian State Criminal Investigations Agency in Munich	5 police-officers wounded. Claimed by the Tommy Weissbecker Commando.
16 May 1972	Karlsruhe	Bombing of the car of the Federal Judge Buddenberg	His wife was driving the car and was wounded. Claimed by the Manfred Grashof commando.
19 May 1972	Hamburg	Bombing of the Axel Springer Verlag	17 wounded. Ilse Stachowiak was involved in the bombing.
24 May 1972 18:10CET	Heidelberg	Bombing outside of Officers Club followed by a second bomb	3 dead (Ronald A. Woodward, Charles L. Peck and Captain Clyde R. Bonner), 5

		<p>moments later wounded. Claimed in front of Army by 15 July Security Agency Commando (in (ASA), U.S. Army honour of Petra in Europe (HQ Schelm). Executed USAREUR) at by Irmgard Moeller. Campbell Barracks. Known involved RAF members: Irmgard Möller and Angela Luther, Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, Gudrun Ensslin, Holger Meins, Jan-Carl Raspe.</p>	
24 April 1975	Stockholm	West German embassy siege, murder of Andreas von Mirbach and Dr. Heinz Hillegaart	4 dead, of whom 2 were RAF members
7 May 1976	Sprendlingen near Offenbach	Police officer killed.	22 year old Fritz Sippel <sup>[32]</sup> was shot in the head when checking an RAF member's identity papers.
4 January 1977	Giessen	Attack against US 42nd Field Artillery Brigade at Gießen.	In a failed attack against the Gießen army base, the RAF sought to capture or destroy nuclear weapons present. <sup>[33]</sup> A diversionary bomb attack on a fuel tank failed to fully ignite the fuel, and the assault on the armory was then

repulsed, with several RAF members killed in the ensuing firefight. The presence of U.S. warheads on German soil was classified and officially denied at the time, and the incident received little publicity. General William Burns, who commanded the base in 1977, detailed the attack in a 1996<sup>[34]</sup> interview.

7 April 1977	Karlsruhe	Assassination of the federal prosecutor-general Siegfried Buback	The driver and another passenger were also killed. Claimed by the Ulrike Meinhof Commando. This murder case was brought up again after the 30 year commemoration in April 2007 when information from former RAF member Peter-Jürgen Boock surfaced in media reports.
30 July 1977	Oberursel (Taunus)		The director of Dresdner Bank, Jürgen Ponto, is shot in his home during an attempted

			kidnapping. Ponto later dies from his injuries.
5 September 1977	Cologne resp. Mulhouse	Hanns-Martin Schleyer, chairman of the German Employers' Organisation, is kidnapped and later shot	3 police-officers and the driver are killed during the kidnapping
18 October 1977			
22 September 1977	Utrecht, Netherlands	Shooting outside a bar	Arie Kranenburg (46), Dutch policeman, shot and killed by RAF Knut Folkerts
24 September 1978	A forest near Dortmund <sup>[35]</sup>	Murder of a police officer	Three RAF members (Angelika Speitel, Werner Lotze, Michael Knoll) were engaged in target-practice when they were confronted by police. A shoot-out followed where one police-man (Hans-Wilhelm Hans, 26) <sup>[36]</sup> was shot dead, and one of the RAF terrorists (Knoll) was wounded so badly that he would later die from his injuries. <sup>[37]</sup>
1 November 1978	Kerkrade <sup>[38]</sup>	Gun-battle with four custom officials	Dionysius de Jong (19) was shot to death, and Johannes Goemanns (24) later died of his wounds, when they

			were involved in a gun-fight with RAF members (Adelheid Schulz and Rolf Heissler) <sup>[39]</sup> who were trying to cross the Dutch border illegally. <sup>[36]</sup>
25 June 1979	Mons, Belgium	Alexander Haig, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO escapes an assassination attempt	A land mine blew up under the bridge on which Haig's car was traveling, narrowly missing Haig's car and wounding three of his bodyguards in a following car. <sup>[40]</sup> In 1993 a German Court sentenced Rolf Clemens Wagner, a former RAF member, to life imprisonment for the assassination attempt. <sup>[40]</sup>
7 August 1981	Kaiserslautern, Germany	USAF Security Police Officer attacked in Kaiserslautern by Christian Klar and Brigitte Mohnhaupt and unknown third party. Security Police Officer on his way to work, riding a bicycle when he was attacked.	Security Police Officer survived the attack. Mohnhaupt and Klar fled the scene in a green VW. Unknown third party was injured or killed. He was never found.
31 August 1981	Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany		Large car-bomb explodes in the parking lot of

			Ramstein Air Base
15 September 1981	Heidelberg	Unsuccessful rocket propelled grenade attack against the car carrying the US Army's West German Commander Frederick J. Kroesen. Known involved RAF members: Brigitte Mohnhaupt, Christian Klar.	
2 July 1982	Nurnberg	Unsuccessful sniper attack against US ARMY Nuclear Storage Site NATO-23. 4 Civilians died the next day due to High alert of American troops / accidental shooting.(2 Adults / 2 Children) Known involved RAF members: Christian Klar.	A family of 4 hunting mushrooms came through a fence downed by storms the day after the sniper incident and were killed by members of the 3/17th Field Artillery Battalion after being shot at just hours before. The 3/17 FA Battalion were guarding the NATO 2-3 Nuclear storage site at the time. The unit was fired upon several times the night before by Christian Klar. 2 US. Soldiers were slightly wounded 1 KIA.
18 December 1984	Oberammergau, West Germany	Unsuccessful attempt to bomb a School	A total of ten incidents followed over the next

		for NATO officers. The car bomb was discovered and defused.	month, against US, British, and French targets. <sup>[41]</sup>
1 February 1985	Gauting	Shooting	Ernst Zimmerman, head of the MTU is shot in the head in his home. Zimmermann died twelve hours later. The assassination was claimed by the Patsy O'Hara Commando. <sup>[42]</sup>
8 August 1985	Rhein-Main Air Base (near Frankfurt)	A Volkswagen Passat exploded in the parking lot across from the base commander's building.	Two people are killed: Airman First Class Frank Scarton and Becky Bristol, a U.S. civilian employee who also was the spouse of a U.S. Air Force enlisted man. A granite monument marks the spot where they died. Twenty people are injured. Army Spec. Edward Pimental was kidnapped and killed the night before for his military ID card which was used to gain access to the base. The French terrorist organization Action Directe is suspected to have collaborated with the RAF on this

			attack. Birgit Hogefeld and Eva Haule have been convicted for their involvement in this event.
9 July 1986	Straßlach (near Munich)		Shooting of Siemens-manager Karl Heinz Beckurts and driver Eckhard Groppler
30 November 1989	Bad Homburg v. d. Höhe	Bombing of the car carrying the chairman of Deutsche Bank Alfred Herrhausen	The case remained open for a long time, as the delicate method employed baffled the German prosecutors, as it could not come from guerillas like the RAF. Also, all suspects of the RAF were not charged due to alibis. However, The case is receiving new light in late 2007 by the German authorities that Stasi, the East German secret police, played a role in the assassination of Mr. Herrhausen, as the bombing method was the exactly the same one that had been developed by the Stasis.
1 April 1991	Düsseldorf	Assassination of Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, at	As the chief of the Treuhandanstalt, a powerful trust that

his house in  
Düsseldorf

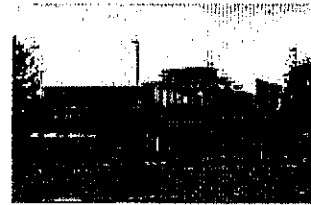
controlled most  
state-owned assets  
in the former East  
Germany, Mr.  
Rohwedder was in  
charge of privatizing  
the assets of the  
former German  
Democratic  
Republic.

27 March  
1993

Weiterstadt

Attacks with  
explosives at  
the construction  
site of a new  
prison.

Led to the capture  
of two RAF  
members three  
months later at a  
train station, and a  
shoot-out between  
RAF member  
Wolfgang Grams  
and a GSG 9 squad;  
GSG9 officer  
Michael Newrzella  
was killed before  
Grams shot himself,  
while Birgit  
Hogefeld was  
arrested. Damage  
123 million DM  
(over 50 million  
euro). The attack  
caused a four year  
delay in the  
completion of the  
site, that had been  
short before  
commissioning in  
1993.



## Films

Several German film and TV productions were made about the RAF. These include Klaus Lemke's telefeature *Brandstifter* (Arsonists) (1969); the Volker Schloendorff adaptation of Heinrich Böll's novel *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* (The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum) (1975); *Germany in Autumn* (1978), codirected by

Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Edgar Reitz; Fassbinder's *Die dritte Generation* (The Third Generation) (1979); Margarethe von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit* (The German Sisters) (1981); Reinhard Hauf's *Stammheim* (1986); Christian Petzold's *Die innere Sicherheit* (The State I Am In) (2000); Christopher Roth's *Baader* (2002); Uli Edel adaptation of Stefan Aust's *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex* (2008).

Outside Germany, films include Swiss director Markus Imhoof's *Die Reise* (The Journey) (1986). On TV, there was Heinrich Breloer's *Todesspiel* (Death Game) (1997), a two-part docu-drama, and Volker Schlöndorff's *Die Stille nach dem Schuss* (Rita's Legends) (2000).

There have been several documentaries: *Im Fadenkreuz – Deutschland & die RAF* (1997, several directors); Gerd Conradt's *Starbuck Holger Meins* (2001); Andres Veiel's *Black Box BRD* (2001);<sup>[43]</sup> Klaus Stern's *Andreas Baader – Der Staatsfeind* (Enemy of the State) (2003); Ben Lewis's *In Love With Terror*, for BBC Four (2003);<sup>[44]</sup> and *Ulrike Meinhof – Wege in den Terror* (Ways into Terror) (2006).

The 2010 feature documentary *Children of the Revolution* tells Ulrike Meinhof's story from the perspective of her daughter, journalist and historian Bettina Röhl.

## RAF Commandos

The following is a list of all known RAF Commando Units<sup>[42]</sup> – Most RAF units were named after deceased RAF members, others were named after deceased members of international militant left-wing groups such as the Black Panthers, Irish National Liberation Army and the Red Brigades.

- 15 July Commando
- 2 June Commando
- Andreas Baader Commando
- Ciro Rizzato Commando
- George Jackson Commando
- Gudrun Ensslin Commando
- Holger Meins Commando
- Ingrid Schubert Commando
- Jan-Carl Raspe Commando
- José Manuel Sevillano Commando
- Katharina Hammerschmidt Commando
- Khaled Aker Commando
- Manfred Grashof Commando
- Mara Cagol Commando

- Patsy O'Hara Commando
- Petra Schelm Commando
- Siegfried Hausner Commando
- Sigurd Debus Commando
- Thomas Weissbecker Commando
- Ulrich Wessel Commando
- Ulrike Meinhof Commando
- Vincenzo Spano Commando
- Wolfgang Beer Commando

#### Fiction and art

- Australian-British playwright Van Badham's play *Black Hands/Dead Section* provides a fictionalised account of the actions and lives of key members of the RAF. It won the Queensland premier's award for literature in 2005.
- Gerhard Richter, a German painter whose series of works titled *18 October 1977* repainted photographs of the Faction members and their deaths.
- The Norwegian painter Odd Nerdrum made a painting called *The murder of Andreas Baader* in 1977–1978, that shows Nerdrum's personal commentary to the events in the Stammheim prison.
- Josef Žáček, a Czech painter created a series of paintings entitled *Searching in Lost Space* (1993)<sup>[45]</sup> - evocative portraits of wanted members of the Red Army Faction - that were inspired by events that had occurred in 1993 in Bad Kleinen.
- Heinrich Böll's book *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, 1974, describes the political climate in West Germany during the active phase of the RAF in the seventies. Schlöndorff and Trotta (who knew the leading RAF cadre) filmed the book in 1975.
- Cabaret Voltaire, the influential industrial band from Sheffield, England, recorded a song called "Baader-Meinhof" that pondered the group's importance in history and their motivations. There are at least two different released mixes of the recording.
- Walter Abish, *How German Is It*, 1980. A book about the German essence of German things like terrorism and Heidegger. Published in Germany by Günter Maschke.
- Christoph Hein's novel *In seiner frühen Kindheit ein Garten* (*In His Early Childhood, a Garden*) deals with a fictionalized aftermath of the Grams shooting in 1993.
- In 1996, British singer songwriter Luke Haines released a 9-track album under the Baader Meinhof moniker. In this concept album, all songs are a romanticized retelling of the RAF actions.
- In 2004, Canadian singer songwriter Neil Leyton composed and released a song titled Ingrid Schubert.
- The feature film *See You at Régis Debray*, written and directed by CS Leigh tells the story of the time Andreas Baader spent hiding in the apartment of Régis Debray in Paris in 1969.
- In the 2005 film *Munich*, Mossad agents pose as members of the Red Army Faction when they inadvertently share a safehouse with members of the PLQ.
- In the upcoming video game, *BioShock Infinite*, there is a faction called the Vox Populi (Voice of the People) who are in many ways similar to the Red Army Faction in that they are a violent, radical left-wing organization with socialist ideals.

- *The Baader Meinhof Complex*, a 2008 movie based on Stefan Aust's book which was nominated in the 81st Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film.

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#### External links

- "[The media's first celebrity terrorists](#)" Picture essay of Red Army Faction
- "[History of the RAF](#)" – detailed, sympathetic account – by *Arm the Spirit*, Toronto, Canada
- [Red Army Faction – Communiqués and Statements](#) – an English-language collection of all communiqués and statements by the RAF
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