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The Ambivalence of Resistance

West German Antiauthoritarian Performance after the Age of Affluence

By

Michael Shane Boyle

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Performance Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Shannon Jackson, Chair

Professor Anton Kaes

Professor Shannon Steen

Fall 2012

The Ambivalence of Resistance
West German Antiauthoritarian Performance after the Age of Affluence

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Abstract

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Michael Shane Boyle

Doctor of Philosophy in Performance Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Shannon Jackson, Chair

While much humanities scholarship focuses on the consequence of late capitalism's cultural logic for artistic production and cultural consumption, this dissertation asks us to consider how the restructuring of capital accumulation in the postwar period similarly shaped activist practices in West Germany. From within the fields of theater and performance studies, "The Ambivalence of Resistance: West German Antiauthoritarian Performance after the Age of Affluence" approaches this question historically. It surveys the types of performance that decolonization and New Left movements in 1960s West Germany used to engage reconfigurations in the global labor process and the emergence of anti-imperialist struggles internationally, from documentary drama and happenings to direct action tactics like street blockades and building occupations. The critical lens of performance allows me to examine what I call the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling: the felt sentiment of German New Left activists who prized the experience of political struggle for its potential to undo the authoritarian personality they believed themselves to have internalized as a result of growing up in Nazi and postwar West Germany. My study looks to the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling for what it can reveal about the world historical shift to late capitalism, by asking us to interrogate the dually defiant yet symptomatic character of activist practices in the postwar period. This requires examining the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling as not just critically resistant to historical conditions of the time, but also conditioned through them. How might we analyze German New Left critiques of high modernist culture and existing forms of worker organization as legitimating the postmodern and neoliberal restructuring of culture and labor? What does this suggest about the New Left's role in the reconfiguration of the labor process during the 1960s and 1970s? And in what ways did the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling anticipate the psychic habitus of late capitalism? Among the artists and activist groups studied include: Gruppe SPUR, Subversive Aktion, Kommune 1, Viva Maria!, Hans Werner Henze, Peter Weiss, Peter Stein, the SDS, and the Kultur und Revolution.

To Morgan and Syd
(in no particular order)

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And finally, to Morgan, my beloved companion on every step of this long march through the dissertation, thank you for everything—especially Syd.

List of Abbreviations

AdK-HB	Akademie der Künste, Harry Buckwitz Archive
AdK-PW	Akademie der Künste, Peter Weiss Archive
APO	Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (Außerparlamentarische Opposition)
APO-A	Archive of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition, FU Berlin (Archiv "APO und soziale Bewegungen" Freie Universität Berlin)
AStA-FU	General Student Council of the Free University Berlin (Allgemeiner Studentenausschuss)
CDU/CSU	Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)
FU	Free University Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin)
GDR	German Democratic Republic (East Germany)
KfA	Campaign for Disarmament (Kampagne für Abrüstung)
NDR	North German Broadcasting (Norddeutscher Rundfunk)
NLF	South Vietnamese National Liberation Front
RAF	Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion)
SAVAK	Iranian National Intelligence and Security Organization
SDS	German Socialist Students League (Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund)
SPD	German Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
TU	Technical University (Technische Universität)

INTRODUCTION

Antiauthoritarian Structures of Feeling: Activist Experience and the Political Unconscious of Performance Studies

“Experience is [...] not the origin of our explanation, but that which we want to explain. This kind of approach does not undercut politics by denying the existence of subjects; it instead interrogates the processes of their creation and, in so doing, refigures history and the role of the historian and opens new ways for thinking about change.”

–Joan Wallach Scott

September 13, 1968—Hans-Jürgen Krahl had just begun his address to the annual delegates meeting of the German Socialist Students League (SDS) in Frankfurt am Main when he was pelted by a barrage of tomatoes. The first hit him directly on the neck. The next zipped just past his head, splattering against the wall behind him. And the final tomato burst on the podium. His assailant Sigrid Rüter shouted, “Comrade Krahl, you are objectively a counterrevolutionary, not to mention an agent of the class enemy!”¹

By September 1968, actions taking just this form had become standard fare in West Germany. New Left activists had first turned to such unconventional armaments in December 1964 during a demonstration against the visit of Moïse Tshombe to West Berlin. As the Congolese despot departed from city hall, demonstrators bombarded his caravan with tomatoes. The emerging movement would soon deploy other edible missiles like eggs, which were used for the first time against the Amerika-Haus in West Berlin during an anti-Vietnam War protest in 1966. Within a year, the German New Left had added smoke bombs and balloons filled with paint to their arsenal.

While the action Rüter performed may not have been unique, its setting—the annual meeting of the largest and most influential body of the German New Left—certainly was. And her choice of target was a striking departure from the politicians, foreign dignitaries, professors, and judges who were typically on the receiving end of such onslaughts. Since the assassination attempt on Rudi Dutschke some six months earlier, Hans-Jürgen Krahl had become the leading voice of the German New Left. Eloquent but also uncompromisingly militant, he seemed to personify the movement. At the SDS delegates meeting just a year earlier, Krahl and Dutschke had delivered what historian Wolfgang Kraushaar calls the “key” speech “in the history of the SDS”: an infamous bid for “the propaganda of gunfire in the Third World” to be joined “by the propaganda of the deed in the metropole.”² Krahl, then completing his doctorate under Theodor

¹ Quoted in Alice Schwarzer, *So fing es an!: 10 Jahre Frauenbewegung* (Cologne: Emma-Frauenverlags, 1981), 13. For more details on the delegates meeting, see Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 1, Chronik* (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 355–357.

² Wolfgang Kraushaar, “Rudi Dutschke und die bewaffnete Kampf,” in *Rudi Dutschke, Andreas Baader und die RAF*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar, Karin Wieland, and Jan. Philipp Reemtsma (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), 20. The speech has been reproduced in Rudi Dutschke and Hans-Jürgen Krahl, “Das Sich-Verweigern erfordert

Adorno at the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research), engaged in frequent public debates with his teachers. Tragically, Krahl's untimely death in a 1970 car accident meant his contribution to critical theory would culminate in the infamous occupation of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* in January 1969, which led to his arrest and prosecution at the behest of Adorno. Given Krahl's standing within West Germany's New Left milieu, the overripe accusations Rürger leveled at the 25-year-old student leader baffled the some 250 activists in attendance. But it was exactly Krahl's representative status that made him such an apt target for Rürger. Her assault on Krahl took aim at the movement he seemed to embody, particularly its unacknowledged patriarchal tendencies.

Just minutes earlier in the meeting, the filmmaker Helke Sander had finished reading a resolution from the *Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frau* (Action Council for the Liberation of Women), which demanded the male-dominated SDS finally hold substantives discussion on "the specific problematic of women."³ The SDS might have been a leading space for anti-capitalist struggle in West Germany, but the patriarchal social relations within the organization, Sander insisted, were a "mirror-image" of those that undergirded society. She explained that while women were welcome to take part in the SDS, they were effectively barred from participating at the same level as men. For a man to attend a meeting required little more than showing up. The patriarchal division of labor, however, meant that a woman's attendance was only possible after she had ironed the shirts men wore to such meetings. Even then, domestic work and childcare responsibilities (Rürger herself was pregnant at the time) left women with little time for reading, debating, or writing as their male counterparts. And "doubly frustrating for women in the SDS," Sander declared, was the fact that when women did join in discussions or offer reports, "their contributions [were] never taken up." Women existed in an "exploitative relation" to the men of the SDS, with the latter group taking on "the objective role of the exploiter or class enemy that naturally [they] subjectively [do] not want." As developments in socialist countries had demonstrated, Sander declared, a "political-economic revolution will not resolve the oppression of private life." The only possibility for a liberated society rested in transforming "the relations of production" and "power-relationships" not just on socioeconomic levels but also in the private sphere. The transformation of everyday life "cannot wait" until after the revolution, it had to be effected in the present.

Sander's speech was met with general silence, punctuated by derisive laughter in some corners of the room. The reply of the SDS—or better yet, lack thereof—seemed to evidence what she had just elaborated. When Krahl took the podium without so much as acknowledging

Guerilla-Mentalität," in *Geschichte ist machbar*, ed. Jürgen Miermeister (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1980), 91. For more details on the speech, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.

³ Helke Sander, "Rede Von Helke Sander (Aktionsrat Zur Befreiung Der Frauen) Auf Der 23. Delegiertenkonferenz Des 'Sozialistischen Deutschen Studentenbundes' (SDS) Am 13. September 1968 in Frankfurt/Main" (1968), http://1000dok.digitale-sammlungen.de/dok_0022_san.pdf. This transcript was transcribed by Elisabeth Zelmer and Patrick Bernhard from an audio recording of the speech made by Holger Meins.

Sander's remarks, Rüger, who belonged to the *Aktionsrat* with Sander, responded with her volley of tomatoes.⁴

In her justly-famous 1968 column on Rüger's intervention, Ulrike Meinhof noted how "tomatoes and eggs" had recently become useful instruments for drawing attention to issues "that would otherwise not be addressed."⁵ Understood in this way, Rüger's action seemed illustrative of the West German student movement's "new demonstration techniques" that sociologist Jürgen Habermas celebrated at the time for being "excellently suited" for "defeating publicity barriers."⁶ Yet Meinhof was not satisfied to describe Rüger's intervention as "a spectacle for the press." Although the tomatoes Rüger threw were certainly "other-directed," Meinhof insisted that they "were not symbols."⁷ To view the action only in terms of communicating a message—what Habermas hailed as "demonstrative force"—foreclosed consideration of its other implications and intents. According to Meinhof, the tomatoes were better evaluated as having been "directed precisely" at those "who got hit in the head." This meant taking seriously the physical force employed and how the tomatoes literally "force[d] the men whose suits they stained (and which women will doubtless have to clean) to consider things they have never considered."⁸ Additionally, Meinhof's commentary pointed to the crucial affective dimension of Rüger and Sander's intervention:

They would have died of suffocation if they hadn't burst into action. In fact, millions of women suffocate daily on what they have to swallow, and what they take medication for—thalidomide, if they're unlucky—what they beat their kids for, throw wooden spoons at their husbands for, or whine about. If they're well behaved they make sure the windows are closed so that nobody hears what everybody knows: things are working the way they are supposed to.⁹

Meinhof pushed readers to think of the action as more than a symbolic attempt to communicate a message, calling attention to the physical as well as the psychic consequences of the intervention.

⁴ For details on the legacy of Rüger's action for the *Frauenbewegung* (Women's Movement) in West Germany, see Edith Hoshino Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," *Signs* 9, no. 3, 454-469 (Spring 1984); Frigga Haug, "The Women's Movement in West Germany," *New Left Review* (February 1986): 50-74; Alan Rosenfeld, "Anarchist Amazons': The Gendering of Radicalism in 1970s West Germany," *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 4 (2010): 351-374; Hilke Schlaeger and Nancy Vedder-Shults, "The West German Women's Movement," *New German Critique*, no. 13 (Winter 1978): 59-68; Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2003), 221-237.

⁵ Ulrike Marie Meinhof, "Women in the SDS: Acting on their own Behalf," in *Everybody Talks About the Weather—We Don't: The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof*, ed. Karin Bauer, trans. Luise von Flotow (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 209.

⁶ Jürgen Habermas, "Die Scheinrevolution und ihre Kinder," in *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008), 189.

⁷ Meinhof, "Women in the SDS: Acting on their own Behalf," 209.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 210.

In advocating this evaluative position, Meinhof stood in stark contrast to Habermas and his celebration of the “indirect power” of “symbolic action.”¹⁰ Yet the differences between Meinhof and Habermas were not analytical; they were thoroughly political. Habermas’ method was tied to his vociferous opposition to what he described as the “delusional” and “narcissistic” attempts of activists to cross the boundary between “symbol and actuality.” He valorized “symbolic action” because he believed that “politicizing the public sphere” could facilitate radical reform.¹¹ Under the given social conditions, Habermas feared that “immediate interventions” like direct action could compromise the genuine democratic transformation of West Germany’s institutions. Meinhof, however, embraced the very emphasis on immediacy that Habermas infamously dismissed as “left fascism.”¹² Her perspective looked onto a different political horizon, one focused less on institutional reform than on the futures made possible by the physical forcefulness and affective character of direct action.

Meinhof’s column articulated a felt sentiment that propelled the actions of New Left and decolonization movements in 1960s West Germany, what I call the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. Activists were convinced that the tactics of intimidation and open violence used to maintain the social order under fascism had been supplanted in the postwar period by more insidious and psychic forms of repression. Above all, they feared that lingering authoritarian character structures inherited from the Third Reich had fused with the reified social relations of consumer capitalism. The antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, I argue here, was a sensibility performed by New Left activists who prized the experience of political struggle for its potential to undo the authoritarian personality they believed themselves to have internalized as a result of growing up in Nazi and postwar West Germany.

According to British cultural historian Raymond Williams, who coined the term, what a “structure of feeling” comprises is “difficult” to pinpoint.¹³ This is due in part to the ineffable character of what the structure of feeling as a category of historical analysis claims to describe. By “feeling” Williams meant to “emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of ‘world-view’ or ‘ideology.’” To speak of a structure of feeling is to consider how “meanings and values [...] are actually lived and felt.” For Williams, the term indicated “characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought.”¹⁴ The emphasis on “structure” points to the social character of what is felt on a personal level. The structure of feeling, Williams explained, is “as firm and definite as ‘structure’ suggests.” It refers to:

[...] the deepest and often least tangible elements of our experience. It is a way of responding to a particular world which in practice is not felt as one way among others—a

¹⁰ Habermas, “Die Scheinrevolution und ihre Kinder,” 189.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹² Jürgen Habermas, “Meine Damen und Herren, ich hoffe, daß Herr Dutschke noch hier ist...,” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 2, Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 184.

¹³ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

conscious ‘way’—but is, in experience, the only way possible. Its means, its elements, are not propositions or techniques, they are embodied, related feelings.¹⁵

My specific designation of an *antiauthoritarian* structure of feeling is meant to index a particular set of lived political practices that New Left and decolonization movements performed throughout 1960s West Germany.

As a mode of inquiry, performance seems well-suited for examining structures of feeling. Williams himself was a scholar of theater and performance, which helps to explain the emphasis his work placed on affect, time, and space. More recently, José Esteban Muñoz has embraced Williams’ model to articulate the relation between the social experience of Latina/o ethnic identity and the performance of affect.¹⁶ Performance scholar Shannon Jackson has even envisioned “one of the major efforts of performance studies to be something akin to the analysis of structures of feeling in aesthetic, collective, and everyday spaces—moments when convention and emotion, technique and force, a gestural movement and a social movement, collide with, rework, undo, and advance each other.”¹⁷ Although performance seems an indispensable lens for examining structures of feeling, the prevailing approach within performance studies for analyzing protest and direct action deprivileges the very psychic and material character of activist practices that were central to the *antiauthoritarian* structure of feeling. As I explain below, performance scholars instead tend to focus on activist practices as forms of symbolic action. This is striking considering the emphasis performance studies typically places on the nexus of agency, embodiment, and subject formation. How can the *antiauthoritarian* structure of feeling offer an opportunity for evaluating and, as necessary, sharpening or recasting the critical tools available to performance scholars for examining political action and struggle?

This dissertation approaches the social experience of activists in 1960s West Germany historically. My study looks to the *antiauthoritarian* structure of feeling for what it can reveal about the world historical shift to late capitalism by asking us to interrogate the dually defiant yet symptomatic character of activist practices in the postwar period. This requires examining the *antiauthoritarian* structure of feeling as not just critically resistant to historical conditions of the time, but also conditioned through them. How might we analyze New Left critiques of high modernist culture and existing forms of worker organization as legitimating the postmodern and neoliberal restructuring of culture and labor? What does this suggest about the New Left’s role in the reconfiguration of the labor process during the 1960s and 1970s? And in what ways did the *antiauthoritarian* structure of feeling anticipate the psychic habitus of late capitalism?

With notable exceptions, performance studies has been markedly reserved when it comes to these types of social historical questions. After introducing the central categories and methods of my study, this introduction will offer a brief reflection on how the reservations toward social history within performance studies can help us to historicize the discipline itself. How does the

¹⁵ Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 18.

¹⁶ José Esteban Muñoz, “Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho’s *The Sweetest Hangover* (and Other STDs),” *Theatre Journal* 52, no. 1 (March 2000): 67–79.

¹⁷ Shannon Jackson, *Professing Performance: Theatre in the Academy from Philology to Performativity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 107.

field's epistemological reticence index the world historical transformations in which performance studies emerged? And what can performance as a mode inquiry allow us to say about the transition from the rigid administration of postwar capitalism to the flexible ambitions of neoliberalism?

Cultural Revolution and other Unintended Consequences

Of the evaluative concepts scholars deploy to discuss the German New Left's historical legacy, none is more pervasive than "cultural revolution." Speaking on the twentieth anniversary of the world historical events of 1968, Jürgen Habermas, for example, lauded the "cultural revolution of that period" for sparking a "fundamental liberalization" of West German society. Although "deeply rooted social inequalities" were not affected by the events, the transformations they precipitated, Habermas insisted, "are not nothing."¹⁸ This mild claim begs an obvious question: if the upshot of the 1960s cultural revolution was "not nothing," then what exactly was it? What do we describe when we speak of the New Left's "cultural revolution?"

Habermas' evaluation followed on the heels of other social scientists like Karl-Werner Brand, Detlef Büsser, and Dieter Rucht who ventured a more specific assessment. By challenging "inherited hierarchical-authoritarian structures and traditionally-imprinted patterns of orientation and behavior," the New Left facilitated West Germany's modernization and democratization by helping the country to overcome "the remnants of a pre- and early-bourgeois society that had become dysfunctional."¹⁹ This account encapsulates the prevailing interpretation of the New Left's legacy in West Germany, which credits the movement for laying the "subjective conditions" necessary "for adapting to the demands of modern industrial society."²⁰ But as Wolfgang Kraushaar reminds us, "strengthening liberal democracy" was one of the more "paradoxical results" of the period.²¹ To provide the "subjective conditions" for the late twentieth century success of the German *Mittelstand* was hardly the type of "cultural revolution" to which New Left activists aspired. As Peter Schneider proclaimed in 1969, the "cultural revolution" is:

[...] more impatient, more generous, less easily satisfied than the economic-political revolution. It includes not only an abolition [*Aufhebung*] of the capitalist relations of capital, but of all relationships in which the human is made into a commodity and the commodity into a subject: the relationship between the sexes, between parents and children, between neighbor and neighbor, between automobile and automobile-owner. It asks, for example, whether we can still tolerate personal automobiles at all. The cultural

¹⁸ Jürgen Habermas, "Political Culture in Germany since 1968: An Interview with Dr. Rainer Erd for the Frankfurter Rundschau," in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, ed. Shierry Weber Nicholson, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1989), 184. This interview originally appeared in Jürgen Habermas, "Der Marsch Durch Die Institutionen Hat Auch Die CDU Erreicht," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, March 11, 1988.

¹⁹ Karl-Werner Brand, Detlef Büsser, and Dieter Rucht, *Aufbruch in eine andere Gesellschaft : neue soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verlag, 1986), 64; 72.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

²¹ Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000), 47.

revolution leaves nothing untouched.²²

Like Habermas et al., Schneider presumed culture to encompass the social level of behaviors, interpersonal relations, and values. But the cultural revolution Habermas et al. attributed to the German New Left does not correspond to the ambitions articulated by Schneider some two decades earlier. As Kraushaar observes, the New Left's assault on the "legitimacy" of Prussian values like "duty, truth, honor, obedience, love for the fatherland, etc." helped to dismantle the ossified social structure of postwar West Germany, but it did not construct a liberated society.²³

Describing Schneider's account as "the definitive statement of anti-authoritarian cultural revolution," historian Quinn Slobodian has labeled the contrasting Habermasian approach "the Whig interpretation of '68 history." He rightly insists that the narratological strategy favored by Habermas et al. "retroactively tames the radical impulses of the protest movement and transforms the contemporary demand of many socialist students for the seizure of state power into the call for a more robust civil society and a more humane form of capitalism."²⁴ As compelling as Slobodian's critique is, his position remains unwilling to substantively consider how the German New Left contributed to the social transformation Habermas et al. identify. Like Slobodian, I hesitate to reduce the New Left's ambition to "fundamental liberalization." Nonetheless, one of my chief aims in this project is to examine the fundamentally ambivalent role the German New Left played in the reconfiguration of the global labor process underway in the 1960s. While my analysis maintains an eye on the future that followed from the New Left, I do so for the purposes of historicizing the movement. Instead of imposing a definitive history or final evaluation of the time, this project grapples with what the particular history of the German New Left can reveal about the general dynamics of the world historical shift to late capitalism.

My dissertation engages a concept of cultural revolution that avoids the common methodological premise of much New Left historiography, which divorces culture from political economy and structural change. George Katsiaficas, for example, has argued that by contrast to the "Old Left," the international New Left that emerged in the advanced industrial societies of North America, Europe, and Japan did not develop "primarily in response to conditions of *economic* hardship." Instead, these movements struggled against the "political and cultural/psychological oppression" that extended from the highly bureaucratic character of governance in the postwar era.²⁵ According to Katsiaficas, "by transforming the notion of politics from administration above to self-management," the New Left paved the way for a new type of revolutionary transformation that moved "the realm of politics from the state to everyday life."²⁶ Rather than wrest power from the state or seize the means of production, these movements looked to "transform individual personality structures" and "the inner reworking of

²² Peter Schneider, "Die Phantasie Im Spätkapitalismus Und Die Kulturrevolution," *Kursbuch*, no. 16 (March 1969): 1.

²³ Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur.*, 47.

²⁴ Quinn Slobodian, *Radical Empathy: The Third World and the New Left in 1960s West Germany* (Dissertation: New York University, 2008), 7; 9.

²⁵ George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1987), 24.24

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

the psyche and human needs.”²⁷ Katsiaficas’ understanding of the psychic character of cultural revolution corresponds closely to the concept I develop in this dissertation; however, he untethers culture from socioeconomic considerations. Katsiaficas presumes that the cultural revolution of the late 1960s did not accompany fundamental transformations—however uneven—in other spheres. This leaves his account unable to even entertain how revolts against societal administration contributed to the restructuring of capital accumulation.

Other commentators less enthusiastic about the New Left have drawn a similar divide between culture and political economy. But whereas Katsiaficas suggests the New Left strove for cultural revolution *instead of* transforming societal structures, these accounts present the New Left’s cultural revolution as proceeding *despite* its failure to upend the whole of society. “[C]ertainly there was no political or economic revolution, no fundamental redistribution of political or economic power,” argues Arthur Marwick of the “long 1960s” period in the United States and Western Europe. In his account, there was never even “any possibility of a revolution on the Marxist model.”²⁸ This hardly meant, Marwick contends, that there was no “‘revolution’, or ‘transformation’ in material conditions, lifestyles, family relationships, and personal freedom for the vast majority of ordinary people.”²⁹ Despite his condescension towards the New Left, Marwick’s evaluation that the 1960s culminated in “the expansion and strengthening of a liberal, progressive presence, privileging tolerance and due process, within institutions of authority” stands as a celebration of the New Left “cultural revolution” when read alongside the assessments from more conservative critics.³⁰ Exemplary of this is the work of Roger Kimball, who insists that the “success” of the “cultural revolution” in the United States is to “be measured not in toppled governments but in shattered values.” He continues: “A cultural revolution, whatever the ambitions of its architects, results first of all in a metamorphosis of values and the conduct of life.”³¹ Despite the differing political undertones of their accounts, Marwick, Kimball, and Katsiaficas each concur that the New Left’s cultural revolution unfolded without concomitant changes in political or economic structures.

Such perspectives ignore the severe crises of accumulation that plagued advanced industrial societies throughout the late 1960s. Together with decolonization movements and revolutions in agriculture, communications, and factory technology, this prolonged period of economic turmoil contributed to the profound world historical transformation that culminated in 1973 with the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary regime and the start of the “oil shock.” By most accounts, this was nothing less than an epochal reconfiguration of the labor process defined chiefly by amplified financialization and a dramatic shift in the global division of

²⁷ Ibid., 197.

²⁸ Arthur Marwick, “Youth Culture and the Cultural Revolution of the Long 1960s,” in *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, ed. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 56.

²⁹ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15.

³⁰ Marwick, “Between Marx and Coca-Cola,” 52.

³¹ Roger Kimball, *The Long March: How the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s Changed America* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2001), 6–7.

labor.³² From the rigid macroeconomic regulation of the Fordist regime emerged a more flexible mode of accumulation, what some term “late capitalism” or the “third” stage of capitalist development.

Following Ernst Mandel’s influential work, Fredric Jameson has argued that although late capitalism consolidated in the 1970s, the technological, diplomatic, and material “preconditions for the new structure” were already in place early in the postwar period.³³ Jameson’s periodization has been subject to much scrutiny, but crucial to my argument is his compelling emphasis on the mutually constitutive relation between “the economic system and the cultural ‘structure of feeling’” for the emergence of late capitalism. Jameson draws his approach from Raymond Williams, who in *The Long Revolution* (1961) offered a theory of gradual systemic transformation in which “cultural revolution” proceeded alongside but in uneven relation to industrial and political change. Famously hostile to the deterministic thrust of scientific socialism, Williams emphasized the essential importance of culture in any “genuine revolution.”³⁴ Although Jameson avoids the culturalism of Williams’ thought, he nonetheless privileges cultural transformation as a necessary precondition for the shift to late capitalism. For Jameson, economic and cultural change might not develop “in synch with” one another, but they are codetermined.³⁵ In other words, the structure of feeling of late capitalism is not determined by the infrastructure, but rather constitutive of it. Jameson first introduced his understanding of uneven revolution in *The Political Unconscious* (1981). Here, “cultural revolution” corresponded to the “‘nonsynchronous development’ of cultural and social life with economic conditions.”³⁶ Exemplary of this was the bourgeois revolution of the eighteenth century in which:

[...] the values and the discourses, the habits and the daily space, of the *ancien régime* were systematically dismantled so that in their place could be set the new conceptualities, habits and life forms, and value systems of a capitalist market economy.³⁷

In this account, revolution in culture is crucial for the preparation and success of the consolidation of any new economic system.

Jameson would use this same model to explain the transition to late capitalism, claiming that the relation of culture and economy “is not a one-way street but a continuous reciprocal interaction and feedback loop.”³⁸ While the material and geopolitical prerequisites for late capitalism had emerged as early as the 1950s, it was not until “the enormous social and

³² See Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of our Times* (London; New York: Verso, 2010); Robert Brenner, *The Economics of Global Turbulence* (London: Verso, 2006); Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble: The US in the World Economy* (New York: Verso, 2003); David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital: and the Crises of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990).

³³ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), ix.

³⁴ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 2001), 10.

³⁵ Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, xix.

³⁶ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 97.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, xiii–xiv.

psychological transformations of the 1960s” that the necessary cultural conditions were found that “swept so much of tradition away on the level of *mentalités*.” Jameson explains:

Thus the economic preparation of Postmodernism or late capitalism began in the 1950s, after the wartime shortages of consumer goods and spare parts had been made up, and new products and new technologies (not least those of the media) could be pioneered. On the other hand, the *psychic habitus* of the new age demands the absolute break, strengthened by a generational rupture, achieved more properly in the 1960s (it being understood that economic development does not then pause for *that*, but very much continues along its own level and according to its own logic).³⁹

Just as an earlier mode of capital accumulation depended for success on what Max Weber termed the “protestant ethic,” so too, Jameson argues, does the newly emergent labor process of the late twentieth century require the creation of people with new values and sensibilities “capable of functioning in a very peculiar socioeconomic world.”⁴⁰

Despite Jameson’s almost exclusive focus on the American case, his theory aptly describes the social experience of postwar West Germany as well. Much scholarship in the humanities has tracked the consequence of late capitalism’s cultural logic for artistic production and cultural consumption. This dissertation by contrast asks us to consider how activist practices in West Germany not only responded to the accumulation and legitimacy crises of the 1960s, but were also culturally constitutive of this historical transformation. I do so not by conflating activist practices with art or by over-aestheticizing them. Instead, I examine protest and direct action as part and parcel of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. This leads me to ask: how did the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling contribute to, or at the very least, anticipate the “psychic habitus” of late capitalism?

Structure of Feeling as Cultural Hypothesis

Questions similar to the one I ended the previous section by asking have informed several influential studies into the reconfiguration of capital accumulation since the 1960s. The highly theoretical character of these accounts—though useful for grasping the abstract and global dynamics of the processes and principles involved—leave unexamined the particular ways the New Left of the 1960s partook in the general restructuring of the world capitalist system. Here I approach this scholarship as both motivation and the occasion for my own study of what the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling can tell us about the world historical transformations of the postwar period.

Emblematic of these inquiries into the constitutive role of New Left opposition in the transition to late capitalism is *The New Spirit of Capitalism* by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello. Writing on the post-68 experience in France but with a sense of abstraction that gestures beyond national borders, these sociologists examine how it came to be that decades of “flourishing

³⁹ Ibid., xix.

⁴⁰ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Los Angeles.: Roxbury Pub. Co., 2001); Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, xiv.

capitalism” followed from the financial crises and militant anti-capitalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. They credit the staggering profits of subsequent decades to a profound reorganizing of the economy as defined by the expansion of financial markets aided by favorable government policies, and, most crucially, “greater labor flexibility.”⁴¹ In their telling, “the great transformation” of capitalism unfolded not despite but partly as a result of the challenges New Left and labor movements presented to the hierarchical Fordist labor process.⁴² Together with the exigencies brought on by decolonization movements, the severe economic and political crises that marked the late 1960s and early 1970s comprised the historical conjuncture for capitalism to “extricate itself from a number of fetters linked to its previous mode of accumulation.”⁴³

For Boltanski and Chiapello, the question to ask is not why the social movements of the period “were unable to prevent a redeployment of capitalism that proved so costly in human terms,” but “whether deliberately or inadvertently, they have even encouraged this shift.”⁴⁴ In their answer, the pair argue that the capitalist system depends for its continued existence on the very “critiques” and “tests” it routinely encounters. Capitalism, according to Boltanski and Chiapello, is defined by the ability to use the challenges presented to it to adapt to technological and cultural shifts and become “infinitely more robust.”⁴⁵ “Enemies” of capitalism, they argue, are its “mainspring.”⁴⁶ The financial and legitimation crises the world capitalist system faced in the 1960s and 1970s “induced a transformation in its operation and mechanisms.” The system responded not by capitulating to the challenges posed, but by circumventing and/or redirecting them.⁴⁷ Their argument offers perhaps the cleanest account of how capitalism not only “disarm[ed the] critique” of the 1960s but used it to “discover a new dynamism.”⁴⁸ Boltanski and Chiapello refuse a crude determinist explanation, but the level of abstraction on which their narrative proceeds threatens to convert New Left and worker resistance into an almost purely discursive phenomenon. While provocative, their claim that “critique” is the “motor” of change “in the spirit of capitalism” offers little sense as to the shape or contour of what constitutes “critique.”⁴⁹

If Boltanski and Chiapello compel us to account for the constitutive character of New Left resistance in the transition to late capitalism, then David Harvey allows us to consider more closely the New Left’s historical consequences. Like Boltanski and Chiapello, Harvey’s periodization suggests that the capitalist restructuring of the early 1970s directly followed from the crises and ruptures of the late 1960s. But Harvey does not present this transformation as the

⁴¹ Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory C Elliott (London; New York: Verso, 2007), xxviii.

⁴² *Ibid.*, xlii.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, xlv.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, xliii.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

result of a unidirectional movement in time; instead he portrays it as a shift within the given capitalist totality itself:

It seems as if postmodernist flexibility merely reverses the dominant order to be found in Fordist modernity. The latter achieved relative stability in its political-economic apparatus in order to produce strong social and material change, whereas the former has been dogged by disruptive instability in its political-economic apparatus, but sought compensation in stable places of being and in charismatic geopolitics.⁵⁰

The two antinomies of capitalist formation that Harvey identifies, defined here by the rigidity of Fordist modernity and the flexibility of postmodern financialization, comprise a coherent whole. Taken together, they constitute “a structural description of the totality of political-economic and cultural-ideological relations within capitalism.” According to Harvey, categories like modernism and postmodernism are “static reifications imposed upon the fluid interpretations of dynamic oppositions.”⁵¹ He insists that coming to terms with the complex and contradictory forces at work within capitalism can allow us to grasp its dynamism. In Harvey’s system of thought, the rupture of the late 1960s is symptomatic of a “matrix of internal relations” within which “there is never one fixed configuration, but a swaying back and forth between centralization and decentralization, between authority and deconstruction, between hierarchy and anarchy, between permanence and flexibility, between the detail and the social division of labor.”⁵² To take seriously this internal dynamism is to grapple with capitalism as a “revolutionary mode of social organization.” Capitalism does not just respond to and incorporate crises and critiques. For Harvey, it “produces problems of overaccumulation” which permit the type of creative destruction it needs to grow and transition.⁵³

Like Boltanski and Chiapello, Harvey presents the New Left as one of the forces capitalism created for itself to push the labor process from discipline to flexibility. But Harvey’s account of the constitutive character of the New Left in this shift affords activists considerably more agential capacity than does *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. In Harvey’s analysis, nothing necessarily predetermined the historical outcome of the New Left project. Just as “the turn to flexible labour processes” did not exclude the possibility of “opening to a new era of democratic and highly decentralized labour relations and co-operative endeavors,” nothing suggests that “a mode of thought that is anti-authoritarian and iconoclastic” cannot be productive of a “more liberatory politics.”⁵⁴ Harvey instead boils the failure of the New Left down to what he perceives was its stronger connection to libertarianism than Marxism. He agrees that the New Left was justified in breaking with the reactionary views of the Old Left on questions of race, gender, sexuality, decolonization, marginalized minorities, and ecology. Nevertheless, Harvey laments that resistance to Marxism did not stop with the “shackles” of Old Left politics, but instead led the New Left to abandon “historical materialism” altogether. Activist rejection of this crucial

⁵⁰ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 339.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 339; 342.

⁵³ Ibid., 343.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 353.

method of analysis explains, according to Harvey, the “unintended consequences” of the New Left.

Richard Sennett has similarly argued that the New Left’s libertarian spirit culminated in effects contrary to the movement’s aspirations. But whereas Harvey refers to the New Left’s attempts to extricate itself from the “shackles” of the Old Left, Sennett focuses on the New Left impulse to escape the Weberian “iron cage” of administered capitalist society and state socialism. If the aim of the New Left had been “to take apart rigid bureaucracy,” then, Sennett argues, “perversely, contemporary history has begun to grant that wish, though not in ways radicals of my youth would have wished.”⁵⁵ Sennett’s work reads as a striking counterargument to scholars like Katsiaficas. He prompts us to consider more closely the celebrations of “the sanctity of individual freedom” and “self-management” that are so characteristic of triumphalist New Left rhetoric and historiography.⁵⁶ “Bureaucracy” and “centralized power” did not wither away following the 1960s—it “reorganized” and “reconfigured” itself for the purposes of profit and finance.⁵⁷

Both Harvey and Sennett suggest the New Left achieved its libertarian aims albeit, as Sennett puts it, in “perverse form.”⁵⁸ But where Sennett’s account comes close to absolving the New Left by placing the burden of responsibility primarily on the ambitions of capitalism itself, Harvey’s description is a thoroughgoing critique of the international movement. Harvey certainly does not let the division of labor off the hook, but he makes certain to highlight the “unintended” character of what followed from the New Left’s refusal of historical materialism. This methodological disinclination, Harvey claims, left activists unequipped to foresee the consequences of their actions. The good intentions of the New Left did not go awry; they were predicated on a false understanding of how historical transformation unfolds:

The New Left thereby cut itself off from its own ability to have a critical perspective on itself or on the social processes of transformation that underlay the surge into postmodernist ways of thought. In insisting that it was culture and politics that mattered, and that it was neither reasonable nor proper to invoke economic determination even in the last instance (let alone invoke theories of capital circulation and accumulation, or of necessary class relations in production), it was unable to stop its own drift into ideological positions that were weak in contest with the new-found strength of the neo-conservatives, and which forced it to compete on the same terrain of image production, aesthetics, and ideological power when the means of communication lay in its opponents’ hands.⁵⁹

Like the accusations of “short-sighted praxis” Theodor Adorno would wield against West German students in 1969, Harvey suggests the New Left lacked the capacity to critically reflect on its immanent relation to the capitalist totality.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 2; 181.

⁵⁶ Katsiaficas, *The imagination of the New Left*, 23.

⁵⁷ Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, 181.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁹ 354

⁶⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, “Keine Angst Vor Dem Elfenbeinturm: Spiegel-Gespräch Mit Dem Frankfurter Sozialphilosophen Professor Theodor W. Adorno,” *Spiegel*, May 5, 1969.

Harvey's account is compelling—but more as a defense of historical materialism than a substantive critique of the New Left. Similar to Boltanski and Chiapello and Sennett, Harvey's broad theoretical approach does not allow him to actually examine how the New Left contributed to the historical transformation under consideration. Instead, the New Left appears for these scholars as an abstraction that helped to motor the shift to flexible accumulation. I do not disagree with the conclusions offered by these theorists. Yet in our haste to issue sweeping critiques of the “unintended consequences” of the New Left, what knowledge, what lessons are lost? Like the “active forgetting of the events” that characterizes what Kristin Ross has described as the “afterlives” of the Paris *événements* in May 1968, the New Left in accounts like these becomes “disembodied, increasingly vague in [its] contours, even inchoate in its aims [...] more and more a purely discursive phenomenon.”⁶¹ This forgetting does not stem from any “shroud of silence” around the New Left; it is a direct result of studies that attribute “unintended consequences” to the New Left without substantively interrogating the inconsistencies, contradictions, and, of course, possibilities of what was felt and intended.⁶² Careful study of the German New Left's antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, I believe, can help to ground our understanding of the social dynamics of the shift to late capitalism.

The antiauthoritarian structure of feeling could be said to describe a particular social experience of the postwar period in West Germany. Here again, the biography of Hans-Jürgen Krahl seems exemplary. Like most of his generation, Krahl was born during the Third Reich and came of age in 1950s West Germany, a time when “coming to terms” with the crimes of the Nazi era took a backseat to economic and political rebuilding.⁶³ He was raised in a parochial household in a small village in Lower Saxony. It was not until middle school, Krahl would later recall, that he first learned details of the Nazi atrocities—hardly uncommon for his generation. But for Krahl the scars of the Third Reich were not only psychic, they were also physical; when just a small child, he lost his right eye during one of the final bombings of the war. Participation in groups like the SDS had been for him, as he once testified in court, an “educational process” (*Bildungsprozess*).⁶⁴ He described the “antiauthoritarian revolt” as first and foremost the “reconstruction” of the individual in “an emancipated sense” through “practical struggle against this system.”⁶⁵ Like so many others in the movement, Krahl claimed the performance of direct action to be a form of self-fashioning that could undo the authoritarian personality.

⁶¹ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 3; 182.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶³ On the concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) in postwar West Germany, see Theodor W. Adorno, “What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?,” in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey H. Hartmann (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 114–129. See also Chapters One and Two of this dissertation.

⁶⁴ Hans Jürgen Krahl, “Angabe zur Person,” in *Konstitution und Klassenkampf* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 2008), 25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

What makes “structure of feeling” useful for discussing social experience is also what limits it as an explanatory category. As several critics of Raymond Williams have noted, the very concept of “social experience” on which Williams bases his term elides histories of difference. “The unifying aspect of experience,” Joan Wallach Scott argues, “excludes whole realms of human activity by simply not counting them as experience, at least not with any consequences for social organization or politics.”⁶⁶ Depending on the social experience it claims to articulate, the very category of a singular antiauthoritarian structure of feeling can, for example, obscure how feminist activists like Rieger, Sander, and Meinhof experienced the legacy of the Third Reich and consumer culture as a result of the patriarchal division of labor. The same holds true for prominent student leaders of the German New Left like Rudi Dutschke and Bernd Rabehl whose social experiences were undoubtedly inflected by their childhoods in communist East Germany. Even the particular biography of Krahl troubles any “unifying” aspiration of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling: almost unique among members of the SDS, Krahl openly expressed a sexual preference for men.

As Scott notes, “given its usage to essentialize identity and reify the subject,” one might be tempted to do away with the category of experience and its attendant modes of analysis. Yet Scott herself argues that experience “is not a word we can do without.” This is due less to the term’s “ubiquity” than how it offers a “way of talking about what happened, of establishing difference and similarity.” Rather than “abandon [experience] altogether,” we need “to work with it, to analyze its operations and to redefine its meaning.” This demands taking experience as “neither self-evident nor straightforward,” and recognizing that “it is always contested, and always therefore political.”⁶⁷ Although the very notion of an antiauthoritarian structure of feeling is a construction, this does not mean that the critical process of examining it cannot yield insight into the social relations and epochal structural transformations of the 1960s. This dissertation looks to track the emergence of an antiauthoritarian structure of feeling in the wake of West Germany’s postwar industrial boom, beginning at the height of the West German *Wirtschaftswunder*, or “Economic Miracle,” in 1957 and continuing through to the crises of accumulation and legitimacy that marked the late 1960s. The antiauthoritarian structure of feeling appears here as a point of entry for interrogating the profound cultural transformations that unfolded during this period.

Given the tricky assumptions of experience that can accompany the concept of a structure of feeling, it is with some reservation that I employ the term. In addition to obscuring histories of difference, “structure of feeling” also risks fetishizing experience itself. Williams devised the model of a structure of feeling as a way to avoid describing “qualitative changes” in social experience as “epiphenomena of changed institutions, formations, and beliefs, or merely secondary evidence of changed social and economic relations between and within classes.”⁶⁸ The

⁶⁶ Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 785.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 797. For survey on the varied usages of “experience” in Western thought, see Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁶⁸ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 131.

term is characteristic of the anti-structuralist impulse of British Marxist humanism in the postwar period, of which E.P. Thompson's work is representative. In his magisterial *The Making of the English Working Class* (1961), Thompson claimed to "rescue" the working poor in 18th and 19th century England "from the enormous condescension of posterity."⁶⁹ Implicit in this foundational text of new social history was a humanist desire to restore agency to social groups that structuralist and scientific accounts buried beneath abstract historical forces and overwhelming apparatuses. Thompson approached this task by claiming to articulate the social experience of the historical subjects he studied. As he insisted in his fiery critique of Althusserian Marxism, *The Poverty of Theory* (1978), Thompson believed that through social experience "structure is transmuted into process, and the subject re-enters history."⁷⁰ Unsurprisingly, structuralist thinkers roundly denounced this approach.⁷¹ But the claims of "lived experience," "present being," "immediate feeling" that run throughout the work of Thompson and Williams draw even more trenchant critiques from scholars informed by poststructuralism. For Scott, the methodological premise that past experience could be accessed by a historian is simultaneously naïve and arrogant. In the work of Thompson and Williams, she argues, experience assumes the form of "uncontestable evidence" or a "conclusive explanation, beyond which few questions can or need to be asked."⁷² This "evidence of experience," though meant to undo the foundationalist precepts of empiricism, only replaces a fetish for data with the fetishization of experience.

My study takes seriously Williams' description of the structure of feeling as a "cultural hypothesis" that can help us to historicize "emergent or pre-emergent" social forms.⁷³ In doing so, however, I look to delink "structure of feeling" from Williams' conviction that experience is "the most authentic kind of truth" available for historical analysis.⁷⁴ My site of study is not social experience itself, but rather the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling *as I see it* articulated in the historical materials I examine. Williams insisted on distinguishing between structures of feeling and ideology. Critics like his former student Terry Eagleton, however, challenged this distinction by pointing to the centrality of experience in the very concept of a structure of feeling. If, as Eagleton contended, experience is "ideology's homeland," then any structure of feeling is by definition ideological.⁷⁵ When pressed on this topic in the late 1970s, Williams himself defended the possibility for non-ideological experience, but conceded that ideological blockages meant that it was "very dangerous to presume that an articulate structure of feeling is necessarily equivalent to inarticulate experience."⁷⁶ In his own work, Williams was loath to enforce this crucial distinction between felt experience and structures of feeling, which claimed to give voice

⁶⁹ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 12–13.

⁷⁰ E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory & Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978), 170.

⁷¹ See Perry Anderson, *Arguments Within English Marxism* (London: NLB, 1980).

⁷² Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," 777; 790.

⁷³ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 132.

⁷⁴ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 128.

⁷⁵ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 15.

⁷⁶ Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters* (London; New York: Verso, 1981), 165.

to such experience. My method of analysis, however, strictly polices this boundary. I try to emphasize throughout that what West German activists wrote and said about their experiences cannot be taken as an unmediated account or reflection of these experiences. However ideological or false an articulation might be, its inconsistencies, fallacies, and potential contradictions, I believe, often contain the most revealing insight into the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. And it goes without saying, but my categorization of these articulations as belonging to a structure of feeling are likewise revelatory of my own political and academic priorities.

When it came to what comprised an articulation of a structure of feeling, Williams privileged art and literature. He viewed novels, plays, and paintings as “inalienable elements of a social material process.”⁷⁷ In addition to being well-suited to encapsulating a structure of feeling, aesthetic experience, he claimed, provided a unique opportunity through which a historian could experience social history. For a movement that was hostile to given systems of artistic production, examining the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling through art and literature would have been extremely difficult. As a result, my study of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling draws primarily from materials like posters, fliers, pamphlets, meeting notes, speeches, diaries, interviews, and court transcripts, as well as less conventional archival items such as buttons and stickers. Photographs and extant film footage have also been examined. Additionally, my study includes careful discussion of books, articles, and reports that activists themselves read at the time. Given the German New Left’s engagement with critical theory and decolonization thought, the work of the Frankfurt School and figures like Frantz Fanon and Che Guevara appear prominently in this dissertation, helping to round out my account of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. This methodological decision has the added upshot of allowing me to track a particular social history of critical theory. In addition to illuminating how theorists like Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin influenced the German New Left, for example, this dissertation also offers insight into how activists informed the reception and production of social thought itself.

It bears repeating that my site of study is not the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling itself, but its enmeshment in the historical transformations of the period. This is particularly important to keep in mind considering the many criticisms that have been leveled against Williams for ignoring that existence and our experience of it is imposed by conditions not of our choosing. Anthony Barnett, for instance, has critiqued Williams’ belief in experience as “the repository of truth.” While experience can be a “vital instrument of discovery,” Barnett argues that “the laws of motion of capitalism as a global system obviously can only be uncovered by arguments of an abstract kind. The consequences of these laws of motion will be experienced, but the reality of the process behind such effects cannot be uncovered by experience.”⁷⁸ Without a doubt, abstraction is a vital instrument for comprehending history. But this project takes

⁷⁷ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 133.

⁷⁸ Anthony Barnett, “Raymond Williams and Marxism: A Rejoinder to Terry Eagleton,” *New Left Review*, no. 99 (October 1976): 62.

seriously Fredric Jameson's conclusion that emergent structures of feeling are—along with social structures and changing political and economic conditions—constitutive of historical transformation. To examine these structures of feeling and how they contribute to the dynamics of history demands that we speak of social experience, but in ways that avoid culturalism and the fetishization of experience. As I argue below, performance as a mode of critical inquiry is especially suited to such a project.

Performative Turns

The language of performance has long been used to describe New Left activist practices. When tens of thousands rioted in the streets across West Germany in April 1968 to prevent the delivery of newspapers owned by the Springer Verlag publishing empire, Ulrike Meinhof declared, "The students are not rehearsing for a rebellion, they are engaging in resistance."⁷⁹ In a 1970 interview with the *New Left Review*, Georg Lukács expressed serious reservations toward the New Left as an "ideologically very immature" movement. "[S]omeone who believes simply that capitalism can be overthrown by happenings," the 85-year-old Marxist philosopher declared, "is naturally, very naïve."⁸⁰ Despite their different evaluations of the New Left, the metaphors both Meinhof and Lukács employed suggested the insufficiency of performance as a category of revolutionary practice. Scholars of performance are exceedingly familiar with the terms of performance being used for such "depreciatory" purposes, as Clifford Geertz once put it.⁸¹ Likewise, these same performance scholars would hardly be surprised to learn that in recent years performance has become a central lens for examining the German New Left.

In their introduction to an important edited collection on the German New Left, historian Martin Klimke and linguist Joachim Scharloth propose a "performative turn" in New Left historiography, calling on scholars to examine the purposefully staged character of direct action and protest in the 1960s.⁸² The pair authorize this shift through reference to the eminent German theater historian Erika Fischer-Lichte, who herself has theorized the 1960s as marking a clear "performative turn" in society.⁸³ For Klimke and Scharloth, a "performative turn" in studying the New Left requires alternative methods of research and analysis. They suggest exploring the "cultural phenomenon" associated with the German New Left not just as "semiotic codes or textual meaning fabrics" available to be read and interpreted, but also as "made up of a dynamic

⁷⁹ Meinhof, "Women in the SDS: Acting on their own Behalf," 239.

⁸⁰ Georg Lukács, "The Twin Crises: An Interview with NLR," *New Left Review*, no. 60 (April 1970): 44.

⁸¹ Clifford Geertz, "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought," in *Local knowledge* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 26.

⁸² Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, "Maos Rote Garden?," in *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*, ed. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2007), 1.

⁸³ See Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005); Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Theatralität Als Kulturelles Modell," in *Theatralität Als Modell in Den Kulturwissenschaft*, ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte et al. (Tübingen: Francke, 2004), 7–26.

cultural concept constituted by collective stagings.” Scholars should, they argue, pay close attention to how “public actions with theatrical character” such as “festivals, rituals and ritualizations” as well as “aesthetically elaborated everyday actions” contributed to the “genesis of cultural order and social identity.”⁸⁴ Instead of drawing loose associations between, for example, a sit-in and a staged theatrical performance, their method proposes treating sit-ins as performances in their own right.

Christina Gerhardt has described the “performative turn” embraced by Klimke and Scharloth as a “new focus in scholarship on 1968.”⁸⁵ But as the pair’s reference to Fischer-Lichte suggests, what is “new” for New Left historiography is well-known territory for the disciplines of theater and performance studies. But like the other “turns” in social thought of recent decades (eg. the “linguistic” or “cultural” turns) what a “performative turn” means is anything but clear. The haziness evoked by the term is due not the least to the vastly different meanings that attach to the word “performative” itself. First used by J.L. Austin in the 1950s to theorize a linguistic utterance that does what it says (eg. “I name this ship the ‘Queen Elizabeth’”), “performative” has become a central category of social thought in disciplines from anthropology and sociology to philosophy and theater studies.⁸⁶ But as Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick note, although many fields “now share ‘performative’ as a common lexical item, the term has hardly come to mean ‘the same thing’ for each.”⁸⁷ Within specific fields themselves—not to mention the oeuvre of individual scholars—the term and its myriad cognates can bear wildly different connotations. Today, “performative” is as likely to designate a mode of subject formation as it is to describe the theatrical character of post-studio art practice.

Even in Klimke and Scharloth’s usage, “performative turn” indicates a shift in both the character of the practices analyzed and the lens of analysis. Returning to the work of Fischer-Lichte, we see that she equates the performative turn of the 1960s with “a cultural revolution, [...] a radical reevaluation of all values.”⁸⁸ For Fischer-Lichte, this “performative turn” was:

[...] realized in and sparked off a number of new forms of cultural performance such as spectacular demonstrations and marches, go-ins, sit-ins, teach-ins, happenings, interrupting the course of traditional cultural performances, street festivals and many others. [...] The new performative turn theatricalized economics, law, the arts and everyday life. Theatre became a cultural model.⁸⁹

In Fischer-Lichte’s sweeping account, no area of social life was left untouched by this performative turn. For her, this performative turn was tied to the emergence and expansion of media technologies in the postwar period. This culminated in, she argues, “a theatricalization of

⁸⁴ Klimke and Scharloth, “Maos Rote Garden?,” 1.

⁸⁵ Christina Gerhardt, “Review of Klimke, Martin; Scharloth, Joachim, Eds., 1968: *Handbuch Zur Kultur- Und Mediengeschichte Der Studentenbewegung.*,” *H-German, H-Net Reviews*, June 2009, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=24159>.

⁸⁶ J.L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, ed. Marina Sbisa and James Opie Urmson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁸⁷ Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Performativity and Performance,” in *Performativity and Performance*, ed. Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (New York: Routledge, n.d.), 2.

⁸⁸ Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual*, 238.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

our everyday world,” wherein every level of society became a “staged reality.”⁹⁰ The two components of the performative turn described by Fischer-Lichte—media and stage performance—tremendously inform the methods for studying activist practices used by historians and scholars of performance. In both New Left historiography and performance studies, protest and direct action appear primarily as symbolic action, most often engineered for the media. While any performance analysis of protest since the 1960s must pay careful attention to the role of media in political life, the “staged” character of these practices should not be our only or even primary focus of study. What other questions about protest and direct action does the lens of performance allow us to ask?

In German New Left historiography and performance studies, the prevailing approach to examining activist practices is what Klimke and Scharloth call “the dialectic of protest and media-staging.”⁹¹ This scholarship attends to how activists staged actions for the media as well as the ways media framing transformed the goals and gains of political movements. Work by communications scholar Kathrin Fahlenbrach on the “expressive” and “instrumental” aspects of “protest-communication” and Dorothee Liehr’s turn to the theater in embracing the term “*Inszenierung*” (staging or dramaturgy) as a “key analytic category” for studying the “expressive-dramaturgical dimensions” of New Left political actions are representative in this regard.⁹² Both studies present activists as having aimed, so Liehr writes, “to spread their messages in the form of symbolic politics through tactical ‘event-stagings.’”⁹³ Yet the notion of “1968 as media event” is not new. Writing in 1993, for example, the noted journalist and magazine editor Stefan Aust presented the protests of the 1960s as a “media revolt” that took place “with the media, against the media, in front of the media.”⁹⁴ More internationally, Todd Gitlin’s evocatively titled book, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, argues that the New Left in the United States both succeeded and failed because of its cooptation by the media.⁹⁵

New Left historians are not alone in this approach. Performance theorists such as Baz Kershaw insist that protests since the 1960s are above all a form of performance staged before

⁹⁰ Fischer-Lichte, “Theatralität Als Kulturelles Modell,” 8.

⁹¹ Klimke and Scharloth, “Maos Rote Garden?,” 2.

⁹² Kathrin Fahlenbrach, “Protestinszenierungen: Die Studentenbewegung im Spannungsfeld von Kultur-Revolution und Medien-Evolution,” in *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*, ed. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2007), 15; Dorothee Liehr, Martin Klimke, and Joachim Scharloth, eds., “Ereignisinszenierung im Medienformat: Proteststrategien und Öffentlichkeit—eine Typologie,” in *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2007), 32. See also Kathrin Fahlenbrach, *Protest-Inszenierungen: Visuelle Kommunikation und kollektive Identitäten in Protestbewegungen* (Wiesbaden: Westdt. Verl., 2002).

⁹³ Liehr, Klimke, and Scharloth, “Ereignisinszenierung im Medienformat: Proteststrategien und Öffentlichkeit—eine Typologie,” 32.

⁹⁴ Stefan Aust, “1968 und die Medien,” in *1968: Bilderbuch einer Revolte*, ed. Edmund Jacoby, Georg M Hafner, and Joachim Faulstich (Frankfurt am Main: Gutenberg, 1993), 81.

⁹⁵ Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).

the “the voracious gaze of the media.”⁹⁶ For Richard Schechner, direct actions have become primarily “symbolic deeds” geared first and foremost for “the roving multiple eyes of many cameras simultaneously ingesting images.”⁹⁷ More recently, a new generation of performance scholars have followed suit, devoting attention primarily to the strategies activists use to gain public attention and challenge what L.M. Bogad calls the “hegemonologue.”⁹⁸ As Soyini Madison’s recent work suggests, this approach privileges the “communicative function” of protest and presumes an understanding of activist practices as, to use the words of Jan Cohen-Cruz, “expressive behavior intended for public viewing.”⁹⁹ This method helps to explain how protest operates within an increasingly mediatized society. But it is striking to note that each of these accounts risk obscuring the non-communicative dynamics of activist practices, not to mention practices that are not “intended for public viewing.”¹⁰⁰

My opening discussion of Sigrid Rürger’s assault on Hans-Jürgen Krahl suggested that the category of performance offers many angles and perspectives from which to examine political interventions. And as Jürgen Habermas’ valorization of “demonstrative force” made explicit, the decision to focus on protest as a form of symbolic action is hardly without political consequence. For example, it can be used intentionally to marginalize activists who engage in property destruction as “rabble-rousers, hooligans and opportunistic thugs.”¹⁰¹ But most often the politics of this epistemological choice seem to operate on a more unconscious level as scholars take it for granted that activists must articulate themselves to the media or communicate coherent messages in order to be effective. In such cases, what parades as an analytical lens becomes less a clear methodological choice than a symptom of a prevailing political culture. At issue here is not the focus on the symbolic effects of political action, but the unacknowledged exclusion of critical methods *and* political practices that do not privilege symbolic or communicative modes of intervention.

For Dwight Conquergood, who coined “performative turn” in an influential review from 1998, the term described looking to performance as not only a “subject” of analysis, but as a “method” of research.¹⁰² A performative turn informs the selection of sites as well as the mode of inquiry itself. Methodologically for Conquergood, it meant embracing four central considerations: 1) recognition of the artificiality of all human reality—including and especially scholarship, 2) “radical self-questioning” of one’s assumptions and conclusions about society, 3)

⁹⁶ Baz Kershaw, *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 91.

⁹⁷ Richard Schechner, “The Street is the Stage,” in *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 88.

⁹⁸ L.M. Bogad, “Crisis in California: Creative Protest at the University of California,” *Theatre Survey* 52, no. 1 (2011): 128.

⁹⁹ D. Soyini Madison, *Acts of Activism: Human Rights as Radical Performance* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167; Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 1.

¹⁰⁰ Cohen-Cruz, *Radical street performance*, 1.

¹⁰¹ Kershaw, *The Radical in Performance*, 96.

¹⁰² Dwight Conquergood, “Poetics, Play, Process, and Power: The Performative Turn in Anthropology,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* (January 1989): 82.

a willingness to resist closure in one's own interpretations, and 4) interrogation of how practices both struggle against as well as reproduce hegemony. For Conquergood's colleague Tracy Davis, the "performative turn" takes performance as both the "subject" and "means" of study.¹⁰³ It does not indicate where one looks; "the performative turn," she explains, "is not accomplished simply by swirling on one's heels and facing a new cardinal direction."¹⁰⁴ Performance in this sense is not "an explanatory metaphor," but rather a "tool for innovative exploration" that is attentive "to the implications of bodies and embodiedness."¹⁰⁵ Davis' exultant embrace of play, social change, and the disruption of norms points to many of the concerns and priorities that have become part and parcel of performance studies. A performative turn in the study of activist practices should likewise go beyond simply conceiving of protest and direct action as staged performances to be viewed and read. We should instead venture less conventional and more critically reflective approaches that take advantage of the analytical possibilities afforded by performance as a mode of inquiry. The activist practices I discuss in this dissertation were often not devised as forms of symbolic action, but were prized more for having immediate or material effects such as occupying buildings or blocking traffic. Activists also extolled direct action for its transformative psychic effects. Many claimed that the very experience of protesting or performing direct action could help them to undo authoritarian character structures and alienated social relations.

Studying the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling requires a rethinking of the expressive character of protest and direct action. Rather than treat direct action and protest as reflecting, expressing, or always determined by the subjectivity of an activist, we need to consider how the performance of such actions is also transformative of subjectivity. Dance historian Mark Franko, in the effort to "uncover a political dimension in performance," has pressured the very "concept of expression as the outwarding of inwardness."¹⁰⁶ Instead of approaching expression as the externalization of an inner being through performance, Franko recommends interrogating how the very act of expression transforms a performer. This entails shifting focus from the "expressive subject" to the "subject of expression," a performer who does not precede expression but who is shaped through the performance of expression.¹⁰⁷ Franko's theory of a performance practice that is constitutive of the self's immanent relation to that which extends beyond it resonates in strong ways with Judith Butler's influential critique of the "expressive model" of gender.¹⁰⁸ For Butler, gender expression is not the exteriorization of some inner "essence." Rather, "the various acts of gender," in Butler's understanding, "create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all."¹⁰⁹ This leads Butler to crucially distinguish

¹⁰³ Tracy Davis, "Introduction: The Pirouette, Detour, Revolution, Deflection, Deviation, Tack, and Yaw of the Performative Turn," in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. Tracy Davis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1–2.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Mark Franko, *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), x, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1026>.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 174.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 178.

between “expression” and “performativeness.” Gender is not an expression; it is constituted by repeated performances that conceal the constitutive role of these performances. In short, subjects do not express their gender through performance—gendered subjectivity is constructed through the compelled performance of social norms. Butler’s model shares Franko’s attention to the constitutive character of performance for the subject. While there exist clear explanatory limits in mapping gender performativity to activist practices, Butler’s theory nonetheless pushes us to consider how protest and the performance of direct action are not simply acts of expression and communication, but also contribute to the processes of subject formation.

The structure of feeling examined in this dissertation asks that we consider agency as a capacity produced through performance. The relation of agency to performance in this sense is akin to what Alan Feldman in his study of sectarian militancy in Northern Ireland has described as “not given but achieved on the basis of practices that alter the subject.”¹¹⁰ As dance theorist Randy Martin has argued of the “kinesthetics of protest,” we must consider political action as both signifying and producing agency.¹¹¹ If, as Saba Mahmood contends, agency should not be limited simply to “a synonym for resistance to relations of domination,” but seen instead as “a capacity for action that specific relations of subordination create and enable,” how might we interrogate the simultaneously symptomatic yet insubordinate character of New Left practices?

This dissertation turns to the German New Left as guide and subject for interrogating the profound cultural transformations that unfolded in the wake of West Germany’s postwar industrial boom. The study’s general structure follows these transformations in a roughly chronological manner, from the height of the West German *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) through its decline in the crises of accumulation of the late 1960s. The first half of my project tracks the emergence of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling against the backdrop of postwar reconstruction, the legacy of Nazism, and increasing repression through criminalization of the New Left. Chapter One opens at the peak of the *Wirtschaftswunder* in West Germany, the postwar industrial boom that replaced the ruins of the Second World War with a thriving consumer society within the span of a decade. The chapter traces a genealogy of praxis that emerged against the political and economic conditions of the late 1950s and early 1960s to contest the cultural transformations of the period, specifically the role of culture and leisure as forms of psychic domination. Rather than draw a hard and fast distinction between political economy and culture, my analysis takes seriously how the interventions of groups like the West German wing of the Situationist International, Gruppe SPUR, and its progeny Subversive Aktion, sought to operate on the level of political and economic life. In tracing this genealogy, I take SPUR and Subversive Aktion’s engagement with the Situationist International and

¹¹⁰ Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1.

¹¹¹ Randy Martin, “Toward a Kinesthetics of Protest,” *Social Identities* 12, no. 6 (2006): 791–801. See also Randy Martin, *Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self* (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1990), 1–12; 160–186.

Frankfurt School as crucibles for the social analysis and theories of praxis that would define the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. Particularly important in this regard were their calls for “cultural revolution,” with its emphasis on undoing the psychic character of domination under late capitalism through the performance of direct action.

In Chapter Two, I examine how the legacy of fascism inflected the emergence of antiauthoritarianism in the German New Left, and how antiauthoritarianism has conditioned the legacy of the New Left more generally. In the second half of the 1960s, heightened concern with the legacy of fascism shaped by selective readings of decolonization figures like Frantz Fanon and Che Guevara gave rise to the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. Activists believed that the performance of disobedient (and often illegal) forms of direct action could be useful for targeting not only structures of authority, but the very authoritarian personalities they believed themselves to have internalized as a result of growing up in Nazi and postwar Germany. Through discussions of antiauthoritarian groups like the SDS, Viva-Maria!, and Kommune 1, I examine how *performative antiauthoritarianism*—prioritizing direct action as a form of self-fashioning—troubled traditional theories of political intervention, especially the relationship between objective and subjective conditions of struggle. The antiauthoritarian view of subjectivity as an objective terrain of intervention and rejection of protest as symbolic action occasioned not only fierce accusations of left fascism from mentors like Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas, but it also motivated the invention of new forms of engagement that were translated to West Germany from other national contexts and the world of art. In addition to examining how the legacy of Nazism conditioned the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, I also consider the afterlives of antiauthoritarianism by asking: How did the antiauthoritarian personality anticipate what Brian Holmes calls the “flexible personality,” the psychic habitus of finance capitalism?

My third chapter nuances the portrait of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling by examining how increasing repression and criminalization contributed to it. The analysis focuses on the creative ways that activists embraced the criminal subjectification their increasingly confrontational tactics occasioned. Rather than understand criminalization as having undercut performative antiauthoritarianism, my analysis of the tactics activists developed to engage their criminalization suggests that repression became constitutive of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, conditioning not only the practices of activists but their psychic lives as well. Criminalization helped to trouble the emphasis on self-liberation as the aim of direct action among antiauthoritarian activists and prompted the development of alternative forms of struggle. Activists facing criminalization often turned to highly theatricalized actions in order to exploit the narrow gap between power and authority in late liberal society. The types of actions this yielded not only further upset conventional understandings of political struggle, but also revealed the growing importance of performance and dramaturgy for activism in an increasingly mediatized society. This chapter is particularly interested in how the emergent activist emphasis on media contributed to the reconfiguration of power and authority in West Germany following the collapse of the postwar “Economic Miracle.”

The second half of my project moves into the world of art to examine how the German New Left's critiques of high modernist art worked to legitimate the postmodern and neoliberal reconfiguration of culture and labor. In revisiting the often virulent public debates on aesthetics that unfolded in 1960s West Germany, Chapter Four grapples with the impact of New Left activist practices on art in the postwar period. The discussion focuses primarily on activist critiques of high modernist culture as an instrument of social domination in the "consciousness industry." To combat the function of high art in West German society, activists took to issuing fiery polemics and disrupting institutions of "high art" like theaters, art festivals, cinemas, concert venues, and more. Criticism of high modernist culture often operated through exclusive reference to categories like "use" and "function," drawn from selective readings of Walter Benjamin. This ultimately left activist interventions open to being functionally transformed into the particularity on which the culture industry depends. Moreover, activist aspiration to eliminate abstraction from social life—presumed to be characteristic of elitism and intellectual domination—would be far from liberating for the masses. It could not abolish culture; it only delegitimized the utopian potential that promised to help individuals collectively organize their own experiences and forms of life outside the dictates of the capitalist totality.

Whereas most of this dissertation examines protest and direct action through the category of performance, my fifth and final chapter addresses the struggles that ensued when even the most traditional form of performance—state-subsidized theater—took on the character of an activist practice. I focus my discussion on the debates around several productions of Peter Weiss' *Viet Nam Diskurs*, a 1968 documentary play condemning the war in Vietnam. This chapter studies how West German productions of the play in major state theaters not only prompted public controversy on the function of art in society, but also became a crucible for debates among Vietnam activists from West Germany on how best to support the Viet Cong. I present the play as an occasion to examine the activist call in 1968 to move "from protest to resistance," that is, from verbal condemnation of the war in Vietnam to actual intervention in the war's conditions of possibility. The controversial attempts of the directors Peter Stein and Wolfgang Schwiedzrik to "refunction" Weiss' play from a protest of the war to one that can be used for the purposes of resistance prompted major disputes on the democratic limits of state institutions in West Germany. While many historians condemn the New Left call for resistance as laying the groundwork for the armed insurrectionist groups that began emerging in 1968, I argue its most profound effect was what Rudi Dutschke described as "the long march through the institutions." On this topic, the example of Weiss' play is again instructive since the productions by Stein and Schwiedzrik became the first experiments in "*Mitbestimmung*," or co-determination in the theater. The attempt to dismantle the hierarchical relations of West German theaters is emblematic of the culminating New Left strategy to transform state institutions from within. Far from becoming a tool of liberation, however, concepts like "*Mitbestimmung*" have proven to be considerably more effective as a principle of labor organization and industrial policy in Germany since the 1970s. How did highly public debates on *Mitbestimmung* as a radical theater practice help to legitimate the reconfiguration of the labor process in West Germany?

On the Political Unconscious of Performance Studies

The following dissertation asks that we consider what performance as a mode of inquiry can illuminate about historical transformation. Performance scholars have long been interested in the nexus of agency, embodiment, and subjectivity, but they remain reticent about the broader forces, structures, and modes of production that social historians often use to describe movements of history. A crucial reason for this is the prime place poststructuralism and the cultural turn in social thought hold in the discipline of performance studies. Performance scholarship often interrogates the very discursive and cultural conditions that would allow us to speak of “the social” or “history” in the first place. As a result, performance studies has become adept at examining everyday and micro-forms of resistance, but often unwilling to situate such conclusions within broader social processes. What makes performance uniquely suited to analyzing the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling also makes it an unconventional lens for inquiring into historical change.

Without wanting to diminish the epistemological openings made possible by the cultural turn, I would like to reflect on the consequences of what historian William Sewell Jr. describes as the cultural turn’s “lack of interest in, indeed effective denial of, socioeconomic determinations.”¹¹² Himself a pioneer of the cultural turn in the field of history, Sewell has recently advocated a reengagement with “the social” in history. The case he makes is a historical one, arguing that the cultural turn was shaped by experiences of the “fundamental transformations in the social relations of capitalism” in the 1960s and 1970s. Sewell remains committed to the cultural turn, but he notes a “vexing paradox”: during the very period that scholars began to “gleefully cast aside the notion of structural determination [...] changes in the structures of world capitalism” began fundamentally transforming social life.¹¹³ Although the tendency of the cultural turn “to celebrate the plasticity of all social forms made good political sense as a critique of Fordist social determinisms,” the critical traction its concerns and categories now afford us to critique flexible accumulation seems uncertain. This leads Sewell to worry that the timing of the cultural turn was “inopportune,” that in “taking the cultural turn we were actually being swept along by much larger social forces of some kind.”¹¹⁴ He even goes so far as to suggest an “unacknowledged and troubling complicity” between the cultural turn and dominant political and economic forces.¹¹⁵ The “particular form” the retreat from socioeconomic structures took, the “passion for the small, the local, the elementary, the culturally constructed,” he concludes, seems “to share a certain logic with the processes of deregulation and every-rising economic flexibility characteristic of contemporary capitalism.”¹¹⁶

¹¹² William Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 60.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 52; 54.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

Although Sewell directs his remarks at history, the implications of his argument are especially consequential for performance studies, a field that did not just go through the cultural turn, but was constituted in no small part by it. It is true that “the turn to culture and the turn to performance studies were propelled by the same ‘blurred’ intellectual climate,” but we must also consider how these turns emerged in and through the same historical conditions.¹¹⁷ Whether one fully accepts Sewell’s argument or not, his case should at least prompt careful reflection on the ties that our priorities and methods in performance studies have with contemporary forms of capital accumulation. To raise the possibility of performance studies’ political unconscious is not to dismiss the cultural turn. It is to remind us that our guiding concerns, categories, and presumptions must continue to be historicized. And in so doing, it points to the necessity of bolstering our sense of historical transformation and the roles we play therein.

¹¹⁷ Jackson, *Professing performance*, 159.

CHAPTER ONE

Affluence for All! Situationism and Subversion in the *Wirtschaftswunder*

“If we are successful in changing the economic attitude of the population by psychological means, then these psychological changes will themselves become an economic reality, and so serve the same purposes as other measures of economic policy taken so far.”

–Ludwig Erhard

The Federal Republic of Germany’s astonishing financial boom in the 1950s earned it the popular designation of a *Wirtschaftswunder*, or “Economic Miracle.” But such talk of otherworldly happenings risks obscuring the extraordinary geopolitical machinations that made it possible for West Germany to transform from utter postwar ruin to an exemplar of a capitalist market economy in less than a decade’s time. The \$1.5 billion worth of aid provided through the Marshall Plan played a fundamental role in jumpstarting the economy, as did the nation’s undervalued currency and tremendous demand for West German industrial products occasioned by the Korean War.¹ Nonetheless, the nearly double-digit percent growth West Germany’s economy experienced each year of the 1950s under the stewardship of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Finance Minister Ludwig Erhard was nothing short of astounding. By 1961, “full employment” seemed a distinct possibility even though wages had nearly doubled in real terms when measured against 1950 levels.² Within the span of a single generation, the rubble of the Third Reich had been largely swept away, replaced by the promise of “affluence for all” (*Wohlstand für alle*), to quote the title of Erhard’s best-selling social market handbook published in 1957.³

Following his election as Chancellor in 1949 at the age of 73, Konrad Adenauer quickly defined his mildly authoritarian *Kanzler-Demokratie* (Chancellor Democracy) as staunchly anti-communist and wholly aligned with the United States. The latter nation’s fear of the Soviet sphere of influence in Europe helped West Germany leverage compromises on reparations, industrial dismantling, and even rearmament. When West Germany regained sovereignty and joined NATO in 1955, political reconstruction seemed nearly complete.

¹ On the role of the Marshall Plan in West Germany, see Charles S Maier and Günter Bischof, eds., *The Marshall Plan and Germany: West German development within the Framework of the European Recovery Program* (New York: Berg, 1991).

² In 1949, unemployment in the Federal Republic was 1.9 million; by 1960 it had fallen to 200,000. See Gerd Hardach, “Die Wirtschaft der fünfziger Jahre: Restauration und Wirtschaftswunder,” in *Die Fünfziger Jahre: Beiträge zu Politik und Kultur*, ed. Dieter Bänsch (Tübingen: G. Narr, 1985), 49–60.; Rudolf Morsey, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1969* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007).

³ This is a direct translation of the original German title, Ludwig Erhard, *Wohlstand für alle* (Düsseldorf: ECON, 1957). When published in English, the title is changed to *Prosperity Through Competition*; Ludwig Erhard, *Prosperity Through Competition*, trans. Edith Temple Roberts and John Wood (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Inc., 1958).

With this transformed economic and political landscape came a sea change in West German consumption patterns. Immediately following the war, basic material needs like food, shelter, and clothing understandably took precedence in West Germany. The prosperity experienced in the 1950s, however, precipitated a fundamental shift in consumption. By the decade's end, West Germans were spending a growing percentage of their income on consumer goods, leisure activities, and vacations.⁴ This was aided by ample imports from the United States and a turn in domestic production to luxury items, all bolstered by sentiment that consumption was both a right and a duty of every West German—a necessary dimension of rebuilding national identity.⁵ The new culture of consumption prompted a profound transformation in habits, values, and patterns of life. In short, the *Wirtschaftswunder* was a revolution that was political, economic, and thoroughly cultural.

From today's perspective, it would be disingenuous to suggest, as Erhard did in his 1957 book, that the *Wirtschaftswunder* confirmed West Germany's "successful rehabilitation" from the "quite abnormal" conditions of the Third Reich.⁶ The language of "rehabilitation" suggests an ethical and moral metamorphosis from the subjective underpinnings of the Third Reich, which was hardly underway by 1957. As many historians now agree, "coming to terms" with the crimes of the Nazi era took a backseat in 1950s West Germany to economic recovery and NATO's anti-Soviet military stratagem.⁷ In a rare foray into contemporary political economy, Michel Foucault aptly described postwar West Germany as the "first example" since at least the eighteenth century of "a radically economic state."⁸ The "root" of West German governance after 1948, he argued, was "precisely economic."⁹ Whereas the Nazi state had legitimated itself in terms of the historical mission of the *Volk*, the government under Adenauer—as influenced by American foreign policy and ordoliberal economic doctrine—set its task as securing the nation's financial

⁴ For the most thorough account of this period, see Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1995).

⁵ See Uta G Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁶ Erhard, *Prosperity Through Competition*, xii; ix.

⁷ As the philosopher Hermann Lübbe argued in 1983, the "partial silence" about West Germany's Nazi past was a "social-psychological and political necessity for the transformation of our postwar population into the citizenry of the Federal Republic. Cited in Charles S. Meier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 90. See also Herman Lübbe, "Der Nationalsozialismus im Deutschen Nachkriegsbewusstsein," *Historische Zeitschrift* 236 (June 1983), 579-599. There is an extensive literature on *Verganheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms with the past. See, for example, Ulrich Brochhagen, *Nach Nürnberg: Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Westintegration in der Ära Adenauer* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 1994); Robert G. Moeller, "Remembering the War in a Nation of Victims: West German Pasts in the 1950s," in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). For a discussion that compares responses West and East Germany, see Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). For a critique of this very concept, see Theodor Adorno, "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit," in *Theodor Adorno: Gesammelte Schriften*, 10:2 (Frankfurt am Main Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977).

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).86.

⁹ *Ibid.*

prosperity. In the absence of the *Volk*, economic growth, so Erhard argued, would be the glue that kept West German society together.¹⁰

This chapter tracks a genealogy of praxis that emerged under the political and economic conditions of the late 1950s and early 1960s to contest the cultural transformations of the *Wirtschaftswunder* period. But rather than draw a hard and fast distinction between political economy and culture, my analysis takes seriously how the cultural interventions of groups like the West German wing of the Situationist International, Gruppe SPUR, and its progeny Subversive Aktion, sought to operate on the level of political and economic life, bound up as it was in the profound cultural shifts of the period. Although the German New Left would not emerge as a major force in West Germany until at least the middle of the 1960s, Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion were crucibles for the social analysis and theories of praxis that would define the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. Here I focus specifically on their contributions to the German New Left conviction that culture functioned as a central mode of domination in affluent society. Despite the internal inconsistencies and lacunae of their theories of praxis and experiments with direct action, Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion can help nuance our understanding of the German New Left's later calls for a "cultural revolution." Unlike the later movement's concern with the legacy of the Third Reich, however, Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion exclusively targeted the patterns of behavior in the culture of consumption that had emerged during the *Wirtschaftswunder*. In doing so, they all but ignored the subjective conditions of the Nazi era that persisted into the postwar period. In what follows, I argue that the conspicuous absence of attention to the Third Reich by Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion was itself a symptom of the cultural terrain of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. Nonetheless, their general theory of praxis, which favored the performance of direct action as a means for disrupting late capitalism's psychic modes of domination provided the theoretical and practical foundations for the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling examined in this dissertation.

I am hardly the first to point to Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion as precursors of the German New Left. Nonetheless, my tracing of the call for cultural revolution to the late 1950s complicates historiographic approaches that present the terminological currency of "cultural revolution" as a late 1960s development, as a sign and symptom of a pervasive Maoist influence. The aim here is not to contest the compelling arguments several scholars have put forward regarding the significance of Maoism for the German New Left.¹¹ If anything, my analysis, which grounds the German New Left in a postwar experience of an emergent consumer capitalism, should push scholars to take seriously "cultural revolution" as a central category of the New Left political project and not simply a symptom of "overheated revolutionary fantasies"

¹⁰ The founding of the Federal Republic in 1948, according to Foucault, met with a problem perhaps unique in the history of liberalism. Whereas the question often met with concerned how to limit an existing state so as to allow for economic freedom, Foucault argued, "the problem the Germans had to resolve was the exact opposite: given a state that does not exist, how can we get it to exist on the basis of this non-state space of economic freedom?" (87) Foucault would go on to describe the "the German model" of West Germany's social market economy as paradigmatic of the emergence of "neoliberal governmentality," Ibid, 86-87. For more on the history of ordoliberal

¹¹ See Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012). Petra Rethamnn, "On Militancy, Sort Of," *Cultural Critique*, no. 62 (Winter 2006): 67-91.

and Third World romanticism.¹² My focus on the West German social experience does not dismiss the genealogical influence of Third World movements on the German New Left's cultural revolution; instead, I look to elaborate it. As I argue here, early theories of cultural revolution in West Germany were tethered to a budding interest in the Third World. Liberation movements like those in Algeria, Cuba, and Vietnam replaced workers as the world historical revolutionary subject in New Left thought and fundamentally transformed conceptions of how revolutionary struggle could play out in West Germany. At the same time, the actual political collaborations between West Germans and visiting students from Africa and Latin America contributed significantly to the emphasis on direct action as an instrument of cultural revolution.¹³

Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion's theories of cultural revolution were also significantly inflected by two main theoretical sources: the Situationist International and the Frankfurt School. While the Frankfurt School's influence on the trajectory of the German New Left is well documented, considerably less has been written on how early exchanges with the Situationist International shaped the movement. The relationship between Gruppe SPUR and the SI, albeit extremely tempestuous, was one of West Germany's earliest connections to an international New Left. More crucially for this chapter, the SI helped introduce to West Germans the concept of "cultural revolution" and direct action as a way for undoing the cultural character of social domination in a reified society. And while much has been made of the Frankfurt School's impact on the German New Left, this chapter offers the first sustained examination of how the Frankfurt School's theories of psychic domination, exemplified in concepts like the "culture industry" and the "*Leistungsprinzip*" gained traction in the movement. Subversive Aktion's engagement with Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse was arguably the earliest attempt to apply tenets of Frankfurt School thought to activist practice, making study of Subversive Aktion essential to our understanding of the complicated social legacy and political potential of critical theory.

In tracing this genealogy, I take Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion's theories of praxis as an occasion to more closely examine the very category of cultural revolution as a political and economic project. My analysis presents cultural revolution as having less to do with artistic production than with the transformation of norms, values, behaviors, and patterns of life. As my above discussion of the *Wirtschaftswunder* suggests, cultural revolution is hardly a project

¹² Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 122. For examples of other accusations leveled against the New Left's Third Worldism in West Germany, see Ingo Ingo Juchler, "Trikontinentale Und Studentenbewegung. Antiimperialismus Als Schibboleth," in *Die RAF Und Der Linke Terrorismus*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006); Michael Schmidtke, *Der Aufbruch der jungen Intelligenz: die 68er Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und den USA* (Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 2003). As Slobodian has noted, "The dismissal of Third World influence is not characteristic of recent work on U.S.-based internationalism" (7); Quinn Slobodian, *Radical Empathy: The Third World and the New Left in 1960s West Germany* (Dissertation: New York University, 2008). See Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che* (London; New York: Verso, 2006). Cynthia Ann Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

¹³ Slobodian has documented these exchanges in *Foreign Front*.

reserved for activists and insurgents. Most often it entails the emergence of what Fredric Jameson has called the “psychic habitus” necessary for developing consumption patterns and attitudes appropriate to a given economic system.¹⁴ As I demonstrate at the end of this chapter, government officials in postwar West Germany explicitly identified the “psychic habitus” of West Germany as a necessary terrain of intervention for developing behaviors and values suited to consumer capitalism. Concerned by the psychic character of domination in the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the cultural revolution aspired to by the likes of Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion looked to engage on the level of what Herbert Marcuse once called “material culture.”¹⁵ But how was it that direct political action came to be understood by Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion as an instrument for undoing psychic domination in affluent society? How did this distinguish the German New Left from more traditional—or “Old Left”—approaches to political intervention, paving the way for the forms of performative antiauthoritarianism I discuss in subsequent chapters? And finally, how might interrogating the inconsistencies and fallacies, not to mention the hopes and possibilities that comprised this theory of direct action as a form of transformative performance contribute to contemporary understandings of the relationship between political intervention and theories of performativity?

Gruppe SPUR’s Cultural Putsch

On January 23, 1959, some three hundred artists, critics, and members of the press crowded the Munich opening of *Extremisten—Realisten* (Extremists—Realists) to hear an address by the noted philosopher Max Bense, hosted by the *Berufsverbands Bildender Künstler*, a professional association of artists.¹⁶ Bense however never arrived. In his stead, a young painter from Munich’s Academy of Art named Hans-Peter Zimmer took to the podium and read a short letter of apology from Bense, which attributed his absence to a last minute trip to Milan and Zurich. Accompanying the letter was a tape recording of notes Bense had prepared for his lecture. Instead of canceling the event, Bense’s apology recommended the tape be played in its entirety. Without further explanation, Zimmer turned on the player, but not before leaving out a glass of water on the podium in case the absent Bense got thirsty during his address. What followed was a halting and tortuous collage of incomplete meditations on topics ranging from aesthetics and civilization to ontologies of perfection and coincidence. Those in attendance listened patiently to the nonsensical and barely audible lecture, even applauding politely afterwards. Days later, a local newspaper published an irate letter from Bense revealing that Zimmer had appeared under false pretenses. Bense himself had had no knowledge of the event,

¹⁴ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), xix.

¹⁵ Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 83.

¹⁶ For accounts of this intervention, see Selima Niggel, “Die Spur Der SPUR: Chronologie Einer Künstlergruppe,” in *Gruppe SPUR*, ed. Jo-Anne Danzker and Pia Dornacher (Munich: Villa Stuck, 2006), 14; Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 1, Chronik* (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 146–147; Frank Böckelmann and Herbert Nagel, eds., *Subversive Aktion: der Sinn der Organisation ist ihr Scheitern* (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 2002), 42–43.

and it soon became clear that the event organizers themselves had been duped. The entire speech had been a hoax engineered by Zimmer and a group of young painters working under the name Gruppe SPUR. A lawsuit from Bense quickly followed, as did an exhibition ban from the Academy of Art for members of Gruppe SPUR.¹⁷ The same evening as the Bense hoax, Martin Heidegger had been scheduled to deliver a lecture at the nearby *Völkerkundemuseum*. In many ways, the choice between Bense's existential rationalism and Heideggerian phenomenology unencumbered by the philosopher's Nazi past offers insight into the intellectual life of postwar Germany.¹⁸ Gruppe SPUR's intervention did not take aim just at Bense or the *Berufsverbands Bildender Künstler*; it travestied cultural life at the time in a way that anticipated the concerns and irreverent tactics that would define the later German New Left.

The members of Gruppe SPUR first met each other in 1957 while studying at Munich's Academy of Art. Drawn together by a shared impatience with the formal emphasis in constructivism and abstract expressionism, Lothar Fischer, Heimrad Prem, Josef Senft, Helmut Sturm, and Zimmer first exhibited their work collectively as Gruppe SPUR in early 1958.¹⁹ Though identifying as an artist collective, Gruppe SPUR quickly became known for their open antagonism toward prevailing trends in the art world and the political milieu of Munich and West Germany more generally. In November 1958, they issued their first manifesto, which they distributed to the public by throwing copies off the top of the Marxburg tower in the center of Munich. In twenty-one theses, Gruppe SPUR derided the "cultural desert" engendered by "the monstrous colossus of the technicized apparatus" and its "logical way of thought."²⁰ Although West German exchanges with emergent New Left thought in the United States and Great Britain were still a few years off, Gruppe SPUR's manifesto resonated with contemporaneous critiques of advanced industrial society posited by influential thinkers like E.P. Thompson and C. Wright Mills. "The renewal of the world beyond democracy and communism," Gruppe SPUR declared, "can only arrive through the renewal of individualism." In addition to revealing the currency of existentialism at the time, such declarations need also be read as expressing dissatisfaction with the conformism integral to consumerism on the one hand, and Soviet-style communism on the other. Against the instrumental reason they claimed had led "to cultural devastation...stubborn mindlessness, to academicism, to the atom bomb," Gruppe SPUR demanded, "KITSCH, DIRT, PRIMEVAL SLIME, THE DESERT." Rather than abandon culture, Gruppe SPUR advocated "an artistic rearmament" that would culminate in a "great revolution, a unique cultural *putsch*." To "make culture," they declared, meant having to "destroy culture."

¹⁷ For reproductions of news reports on the action, see Jo-Anne Danzker and Pia Dornacher, eds., *Gruppe SPUR* (Munich: Villa Stuck, 2006), 72.

¹⁸ Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, 146.

¹⁹ The history of Gruppe SPUR has been documented in several sources. See, for example, the following: Hans M. Bachmayer, "The 'SPUR'-Group—On art, Fun, and Politics," in *Upheavals, Manifestos, Manifestations: Conceptions in the Arts at the Beginning of the Sixties : Berlin, Düsseldorf, Munich*, ed. Klaus Schrenk (Cologne: DuMont, 1984); Holger Liebs, "Nicht Hinauslehnen!: Künstler Oder Revolutionäre? Die SPUR Und Die Situationistische Internationale," in *Gruppe SPUR*, ed. Jo-Anne Danzker and Pia Dornacher (Munich: Villa Stuck, 2006), 40–45; Niggel, "Die Spur Der SPUR: Chronologie Einer Künstlergruppe."

²⁰ Gruppe SPUR, "Januar-Manifest," in *Subversive Aktion: der Sinn der Organisation ist ihr Scheitern*, ed. Frank Böckelmann and Herbert Nagel (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 2002), 43–44.

The manifesto's hortatory insistence on the need for cultural transformation owed much to Gruppe SPUR's emerging relationship with the Situationist International (SI). Originally established in Paris by Guy Debord, Asger Jorn, Michelle Bernstein, and Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio in April 1957, the SI had direct roots in the historical avant-garde, most notably the *Internationale Lettriste*, CoBrA, the Revolutionary Surrealist Association, and the *Laboratorio Sperimentale*.²¹ Gruppe SPUR first came into contact with the SI after Jorn encountered their striking Tachist and Surrealist inspired paintings on display at the Schwabinger Kunstzeit in the summer of 1958.²² Jorn and other Situationists like Gallizio grew close to SPUR during visits to Munich later that year, attracted to Gruppe SPUR's commitment to collective, provocative, and non-competitive approaches to art production. When Prem moved to Paris for six months at the end of 1958, he befriended Debord and Bernstein, setting the stage for SPUR's entrance into the SI.

Gruppe SPUR's first manifesto owed much to the writings of the SI, especially Debord's "Theses on the Cultural Revolution," which had been published in the first issue of *Internationale Situationniste* that June.²³ Debord's polemic deplored the present "world of cultural decomposition," but unlike Gruppe SPUR, he framed his position using Marxist terminology and posited more explicit political aims. The "old cultural superstructures" within which artists and revolutionaries "still live," Debord declared, were insufficient and outmoded for grappling with the material conditions that made it impossible for individuals to construct their own daily lives. Whereas Gruppe SPUR championed a "cultural putsch," which suggested replacing one cultural order with another, Debord's treatise introduced the idea of cultural revolution as a particular process of total social transformation:

The situationists consider cultural activity in its totality as an experimental method for constructing everyday life, a method that can and should be continually developed with the extension of leisure and the withering away of the division of labor (beginning with the division of artistic labor).

Debord privileged the cultural sphere as just one of many necessary sites of struggle. It was through what he termed "higher cultural means," namely the construction of life situations unencumbered by commodity relations, that profound social transformation could be had. The prevailing sphere of culture had to be abolished, he contended, but not for the sake of establishing a new art. Cultural revolution aimed at creating entirely new forms of life.

²¹ On the history of the Situationist International, see Tom McDonough, *The Beautiful Language of My Century: Reinventing the Language of Contestation in Postwar France, 1945-1968* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2007); Tom McDonough, *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); McKenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International* (London; New York: Verso, 2011).

²² Jorn was in Munich preparing for an exhibition of his own paintings at the Galerie van der Loo, which would become Gruppe SPUR's main gallery. On the history between Gruppe SPUR and the SI, see Liebs, "Nicht Hinauslehnen!: Künstler Oder Revolutionäre? Die SPUR Und Die Situationistische Internationale."

²³ "Thèses sur la révolution culturelle" originally appeared in *Internationale Situationniste* #1. The following translation is from Guy Debord, "Theses on the Cultural Revolution," in *Situationist International anthology*, trans. and ed. Ken Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/1.cultural-revolution.htm>.

The clearest indication of the differences between SI and Gruppe SPUR can be seen in the self-conceptions these respective manifestos offered. While Gruppe SPUR baldly presented themselves as “THE PAINTERS OF THE FUTURE,” Debord referred to “an international association of Situationists” as a “union of workers in an advanced sector of culture, or more precisely as a union of all those who claim the right to a task now impeded by social conditions; hence as an attempt at an organization of professional revolutionaries in culture.” Gruppe SPUR saw themselves as artists who could upset the existing social order through their paintings, while Debord championed an organizational model of unionized cultural workers that demanded the “supersession of art” as a revolutionary condition.²⁴ Despite their shared concerns, the polemics suggested strikingly divergent understandings of the role “culture” should play in social liberation. Debord expressed little care for the present state of art. Instead, he concentrated on how art—as one tool among many—could help reconstruct daily life. “The Situationist goal,” he averred, “is immediate participation in a passionate abundance of life, through the variation of fleeting moments resolutely arranged.” The SI’s “cultural activity” did not aim at reshaping a distinct sphere of “culture.” They sought to devise ways of extending and defending “leisure” time while abolishing the “division of labor” that constituted unfreedom.²⁵ Art certainly mattered to Debord, but it was not “the last domain of freedom” that Gruppe SPUR held it to be.²⁶ Instead, Debord claimed art to be “a matter of producing ourselves, and not things that enslave us.”²⁷

Despite these differences, the SI leadership invited Gruppe SPUR to join its ranks. At the behest of Jorn—who notably coauthored SPUR’s first manifesto—the SI held the “Third Conference of the Situationist International” in Munich from April 17-21, 1959. To mark the occasion of SPUR’s membership, the SI distributed a flier in Munich on the conference’s final morning that declared: “A cultural putsch while you slept!”²⁸

By the time Gruppe SPUR began publishing its own journal in August of 1960, eponymously named *SPUR*, the group had grown. Among the new members was Dieter Kunzelmann, a 21-year-old itinerant writer who had no background as an artist.²⁹ In addition to several drawings, the first issue of *SPUR* included a German translation of “Situationist Manifesto,” first published in June 1960 in *Internationale Situationniste* 6.³⁰ Coauthored by Gruppe SPUR, “Situationist Manifesto” proclaimed a single goal: “the inevitable liquidation of

²⁴ Guy Debord, “The Situationists and the New Forms of Action in Art and Politics,” trans. Ken Knabb (1963), <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/newforms.html>.

²⁵ Debord, “Theses on the Cultural Revolution.”

²⁶ Gruppe SPUR, “Januar Manifest,” in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 43–44.

²⁷ Debord, “Theses on the Cultural Revolution.”

²⁸ See the flier reproduced in Danzker and Dornacher, *Gruppe SPUR*, 74. The flier also announced a public gathering for the press and other interested parties to learn more about the Bense-Skandal and “Why Munich will never again find peace.” The event, however, never took place.

²⁹ On Kunzelmann’s entrance into Gruppe SPUR, see Wolfgang Kraushaar, “Kinder einer abenteuerlichen Dialektik,” in *Subversive Aktion: der Sinn der Organisation ist ihr Scheitern*, ed. Frank Böckelmann and Herbert Nagel (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 2002), 9–31; Dieter Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand! : Bilder aus meinem Leben* (Berlin: Transit, 1998), 18–37.

³⁰ Every issue of *SPUR* has been reproduced in Danzker and Dornacher, *Gruppe SPUR*.

the world of privation, in all its forms.”³¹ This explicitly political direction was new for Gruppe SPUR, though it resonated with their earlier wariness of advanced industrial society. The manifesto described a “new human force” emerging from the contradiction between the “irresistible development of technology” and growing “dissatisfaction of its possible use in our senseless social life.” Although the increased automation of production should theoretically “give complete liberty to the individual,” the authors lamented that it had led to nothing but increased “alienation and oppression.”

Concern with capitalism’s degradation of everyday life pervaded the thought of the SI. Whereas Marx in *Capital* had theorized an inverted social world based on commodity fetishism in which things took precedence over persons, the SI went a step further to theorize the colonization of everyday life by the commodity. The SI held that culture had become an extension of the workplace, making alienation universal and ubiquitous. As Debord would later elaborate in *Society of the Spectacle*, the expansion of commodification within advanced industrial society created a repressive social totality that corrupted human relations.³² As material needs were satisfied to the point of surplus, consumer society’s drive to endlessly accumulate capital prompted the manufacturing of pseudo-needs that allow products to dictate their very use by consumers. According to Debord, life under such conditions could only be experienced passively since authenticity had been replaced by the proliferation of surface appearances known as the spectacle. In earlier periods of industrialization, culture had functioned as the bad conscience of society. Within the society of the spectacle, however, culture could be nothing other than an oppressive tool that facilitated the continued accumulation of capital.

Instead of “the division of imposed work and passive leisure,” the authors of “Situationist Manifesto” called for a “realized situationist culture” based on “total participation.” Against the colonization of everyday life by the commodity that transformed leisure into labor, they demanded the construction of situations, the transformation of everyday life into “play” or “festival.”³³ A situation was “the realization of a better game,” part and parcel of an autonomously organized culture autonomous from existing political organizations that the SI derided as helpful only for managing “that which already exists.” The culture the SI championed was to be the antithesis of the global “bureaucratization of art and all culture,” which they claimed, however naively, to be embodied in UNESCO. “Situationist Manifesto” called for a “putsch” of the “managerial concentration of culture, located in a single building” by literally storming the UNESCO headquarters. While the SI did not actually believe such an action could accomplish this putsch, the experience of participating in such an intervention could occasion “a revolution in behavior and a dynamic unitary urbanism capable of extension to the entire planet, and of being further extensible to all habitable planets.” As a theory of direct action that prized

³¹ Situationist International, “Situationist Manifesto,” trans. Fabian Thompsett (1960), <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/manifesto.html>.

³² Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983).

³³ For more on festival in the work of the SI, see Tom McDonough, *The Situationists and the City* (London; New York: Verso, 2009), 28–29.

the transformative potential of participation, the SI concept of constructing “situations” anticipated the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling.

Although Situationist thought increasingly shaped their social analysis, Gruppe SPUR continued to privilege the status of the artist. Previously downplayed, this difference with the SI leadership would spark a fight during the SI’s fourth conference in London in September 1960. On behalf of SPUR, Heimrad Prem issued a lengthy attack on the French and Belgian groups for “count[ing] on the existence of a revolutionary proletariat.”³⁴ Despite the organization’s break with the Old Left, the SI’s Parisian leadership continued to view workers as a revolutionary subject. When Prem expressed doubt in “the revolutionary capacities of the workers against the bureaucratic institutions that have dominated their movement,” a vitriolic debate ensued during which Debord attacked SPUR’s proposal to focus energy on mobilizing avant-garde artists to raise the consciousness of the masses. The different perspectives held by Gruppe SPUR and the SI leadership can be explained at least partly in terms of national history. In France, a strong labor movement continued to exist after the Second World War. While the SI rejected the Old Left and its hierarchical modes of organization, they nonetheless maintained faith in the revolutionary potential of French workers. The collusion of the working class with the Nazi regime in Germany, however, shaped Gruppe SPUR’s dim view of workers, as did the conservative behaviors of West German unions in the 1950s. After a failed general strike against Erhard’s economic policy in 1948, labor unions increasingly threw their support behind the Adenauer government.³⁵ Gruppe SPUR’s reservations toward the working class became a defining feature of the German New Left. It led activists to look elsewhere for a world historical revolutionary subject. Gruppe SPUR looked to fill this vacuum by privileging themselves as revolutionary agents. In *SPUR 3*, they declared: “Artists and intellectuals are now compelled to become a new proletariat of the minority as debased servers of people and God.”³⁶

Despite these mounting tensions, Situationist influence continued to be felt in Gruppe SPUR’s actions and writings. By 1961, Gruppe SPUR was arguably the most active and prolific branch of the SI. In their infamous “January Manifesto” from January 1961, Gruppe SPUR reemphasized the need for “play” as a liberating alternative to the “oppression” wrought by the “rationalism” and “deterministic materialism” of postwar West German society. In contrast to the instrumental reason that governed the “unsuccessful games” of existing political formations like “the State, the Church, the economy, the army, the parties, the social organizations,” Gruppe SPUR championed festival as the space “where the creative impulse [...] can deploy itself.” By 1961, Gruppe SPUR was even espousing aspirations beyond the sphere of art. “January Manifesto,” for example, articulated a sweeping desire for the revolution of everyday life. “[W]e demand games,” Gruppe SPUR wrote, “We demand the urban festival, the unitary festival, total, real, imaginary, sexual, irrational, complete, military, political, psychological, philosophical[...].”

³⁴ Situationist International, “The Fourth SI Conference in London,” in *Situationist International anthology*, trans. and ed. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/1.cultural-revolution.htm>.

³⁵ See William Carr, *A History of Germany, 1815-1990* (London: E. Arnold, 1991), 381.

³⁶ See *SPUR 3* reproduced in Danzker and Dornacher, *Gruppe SPUR*.

They envisioned an ubiquitous and unlimited festival—nothing short of a revolution—in which the energy of revolt would not dissipate after an evening of rioting, or in the tediousness of a socialist revolution. Gruppe SPUR also continued experimenting with provocative public actions. In addition to handing out “January Manifesto” as a flier, the group etched it in large letters on the walls of the Munich Kunstverein on January 13—the opening day of an exhibit appropriately titled, *Engagierte Kunst* (Committed Art). The illegal action led to Gruppe SPUR’s permanent ban from the Haus der Kunst by the Bavarian Culture Ministry. In response, Gruppe SPUR stormed the Munich Kammerspiele during a performance, throwing copies of a new pamphlet “The Avant-Garde is Unwished for!” from the balcony. In this text, coauthored with the Belgian and Scandinavian sections of SI, Gruppe SPUR presented a shift in self-conception. They distinguished between the “pseudo-avant-garde” that looked to transform forms of art itself, and the “unwished for” avant-garde that demands “a fully new formation of the conditions of life.”³⁷ Their earlier exclusive focus on art had been replaced with the desire to transform social life itself.

Meanwhile, Gruppe SPUR increasingly found themselves the target of the law. In November 1961, Munich police raided the apartments of several Gruppe SPUR members, confiscating all issues of the their journal (which numbered six by then) on grounds of pornography and blasphemy. The offending material was a series of collages depicting lewd acts between Jesus Christ and an angel published in *SPUR 3*. Munich’s city government at the time, like many cities in Bavaria, was closely aligned with the Catholic church. Catholicism had in fact played a crucial role in postwar West German politics, contributing to the success of the CDU’s electoral gains in the 1950s as well as the decision of many labor union leaders to work closely with the CDU. The two trials involving Gruppe SPUR pitted Munich’s burgeoning bohemian art scene against the conservative and religious Bavarian authorities. In the end, several members of Gruppe SPUR received fines, while four were sentenced to six months in jail. The latter punishment would ultimately be reduced to probation in November 1962.³⁸

Although the SI leadership actively supported Gruppe SPUR during their trials, the split between the two groups came to a head at the SI’s conference in Gothenburg, Sweden in August 1961.³⁹ In his opening statement to the meeting, Raoul Vaneigem provoked SPUR by declaring unequivocally that art would never be sufficient for undoing the spectacle. He went so far as to declare that all art was “antisituationist” even if produced by situationists themselves. “The point is not to elaborate the spectacle of refusal,” Vaneigem explained:

³⁷ The flier is reproduced in *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁸ The highly publicized case elicited letters of solidarity from many Situationists, including Guy Debord. See “Flugblatt” signed in support of Gruppe SPUR by 31 artists, mostly members of the SI, *Ibid.*, 81. See also the letter Debord sent to the trial judge dated April 28, 1962: Guy Debord, “Letter from Guy Debord to the President of the Tribunal, 28 April 1962,” trans. Not Bored!, 2005, <http://www.notbored.org/debord-28April1962.html>.

³⁹ In June 1960, one of the SI’s founding members, Gallizio resigned, having found his artistic career was mutually exclusive to the Situationist tenants championed by Debord and Vaneigm. He would be followed in 1961 by Jorn, who also refused the strict terms of the SI. These departures set the stage for a confrontation between the Gruppe SPUR and the Situationists allied with Debord. Anselm Jappe, *Guy Debord*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Berkeley.: University of California Press, 1999), 67.

but to refuse the spectacle. In order for their elaboration to be artistic in the new and authentic sense defined by the SI, the elements of the destruction of the spectacle must precisely cease to be works of art. There is no such thing as situationism or a situationist work of art or a spectacular situationist. [...] Such a perspective means nothing if it is not directly linked to revolutionary praxis, to the desire to change life.⁴⁰

He continued by laying out an ambitious program to construct “situationist bases” and “seize control of every technological means that is likely to assure the domination of every possibility.” To this “preliminary sketch of the project of a permanent revolution,” Kunzelmann voiced “strong skepticism” of the SI’s ability to foment the revolution of everyday life, while Prem reiterated his argument from a year earlier regarding how affluence had eliminated the desire to revolt among workers. The disagreements culminated during the conference’s third session, which devolved into “violent agitation and uproar” as both sides shouted accusations at each other like “Your theory is going to fly right back in your faces!” or “Cultural pimps!”⁴¹

Just months later, in February 1962, Gruppe SPUR was expelled from the Situationist International. The SI leadership justified their decision by noting Gruppe SPUR’s “fractional activity” and their “systematic misunderstanding of situationist theses.” They even accused some members of Gruppe SPUR of using affiliation with the SI “in order to ‘arrive’ as artists.”⁴² The charges were not unfounded. Not only had Gruppe SPUR refused to vet issues of *SPUR* through the Parisian leadership as promised, but their views did conflict with key Situationist principles. During the Gothenburg conference, Prem had even claimed inability to even understand much Situationist writing, describing it as “incomprehensible to say the least.”⁴³ Gruppe SPUR would continue to privilege artistic over revolutionary practice, joining up with other members expelled from the SI to create the 2nd Situationist International. They remained together until 1965, but were quite distant from the radical milieu emerging at that time.⁴⁴ While Gruppe SPUR’s post-Situationist work was of little consequence to the German New Left, the group had been a crucible for the New Left’s theories of praxis and cultural revolution, shaping the thought of several important figures, chief among them Dieter Kunzelmann. Evidence of the SI’s formative influence on the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling would largely disappear in the 1960s as Situationism was supplanted, both terminologically and conceptually, by the Frankfurt School. German critical theory’s wariness towards the working class resonated more with the West German historical experience. But the impulse that guided much Situationist practice—the belief that the transformation of everyday life would be a necessary element in any social revolution—remained, as did the emphasis on devising new forms of intervention appropriate to a cultural revolution.

⁴⁰ Situationist International, “The Fifth SI Conference in Göteborg,” trans. Ken Knabb and Reuben Keehan (1962), <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/goteborg.html>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Situationist International, “NICHT HINAUSLEHNEN (the Exclusion of the Spurists),” trans. John Lepper (1963), <http://www.notbored.org/spur-exclusion.html>. This originally appeared in *Internationale Situationniste* #8 (1963).

⁴³ Situationist International, “The Fifth SI Conference in Göteborg.”

⁴⁴ Niggel, “Die Spur Der SPUR: Chronologie Einer Künstlergruppe.”

Subverting the Performance Principle

In January 1962, Kunzelmann and Zimmer issued a striking manifesto that anticipated the impending split between the SI and Gruppe SPUR. The pair co-authored “Ritus contra Depravation” with the psychoanalyst Christofer Baldeney (also Kunzelmann’s brother-in-law) and Rudolphe Gasché, a sociology student from Luxembourg. Both Baldeney and Gasché had been loosely affiliated with Gruppe SPUR.⁴⁵ The manifesto presented a Situationist analysis that critiqued “the current structure of society” as “based on the consumption of conditioned needs.” Yet it travestied the bombastic tone and ideas of the SI by suggesting “atom bombs” be deployed against UNESCO, the Vatican, major museums, and all radio and television stations. Their grisliest prescription included giving the “corpses of culture managers and their underlings” to artists and home decorators to use as raw material. The manifesto owed more to the playful declarations of dada than the highbrow tracts authored by Debord and Vaneigem, and it read easily as parody. The authors called their program the “public atom bomb potlatch,” a reference to the defunct Lettrist journal that preceded *Internationale Situationniste*. And they ridiculed the SI’s despotic tendencies by insisting lobotomies be administered to any “opponent of atom bomb throwing.”

In addition to its sardonic tone, “Ritus contra Depravation” also performed a terminological departure from the SI through its opening declaration: “The playful life forces of Europe are being oppressed by the domination of the culture industry.” This reference to the “culture industry,” a term coined by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, marked a turn away from the SI and toward the Frankfurt School. Nonetheless, Adorno and Horkheimer’s lacerating critique of mass culture as a mode of deception and domination in affluent society shared much with the Situationist theory of the spectacle. First described in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which the two German-born theorists wrote while exiled in Los Angeles during the Second World War, the culture industry suggested the collapse of culture into the processes of advanced industrial production. Adorno and Horkheimer claimed late capitalist consumption patterns ensured the continuation of value production beyond the space and time reserved for material production.⁴⁶ Within the culture industry, the totality of cultural life served a “single function”: to impose “on the senses of human beings, from the time they leave the factory in the evening to the time they clock on in the morning, the imprint of the work routine which they must sustain throughout the day.”⁴⁷ In a follow-up lecture in 1963 titled “The Culture Industry Reconsidered,” Adorno argued that the culture industry’s *raison d’être* was more pernicious than selling entertainment; its real function was to instill pre-manufactured modes of identification among the populace. The

⁴⁵ The document is reproduced in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 54–55. The manifesto was a late addition to the SPUR-Buch published in January 1960, and was republished by the Danish Situationists. On the writing of the manifesto and biographical details for Baldeney and Gasché, see Aribert Reimann, *Dieter Kunzelmann: Avantgardist, Protestler, Radikaler* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 93–95.

⁴⁶ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

totalitarian character of the culture industry left no space for individuals to develop an autonomous and genuine subjectivity:

In contrast to the Kantian, the categorical imperative of the culture industry no longer has anything in common with freedom. It proclaims: you shall conform, without instruction as to what; conform to that which exists anyway, and to that which everyone thinks anyway as a reflex of its power and omnipresence. The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness.⁴⁸

Such a devastating pronouncement, which nearly equated mass culture with the *Volksgemeinschaft* of Nazi Germany, was certain to raise eyebrows in West Germany. According to Adorno, culture was not only a symptom of social domination in late capitalism, it was integral to it. The Situationist analysis of social domination echoed the theory of the culture industry in significant ways, albeit with at least one major difference. Like much of the Frankfurt School project, the culture industry sought to explain why the working class had failed to become the revolutionary subject Marx had expected. The guiding premise of Adorno and Horkheimer's work, with its entailed antipathy towards the working class, resonated with Gruppe SPUR's position and distinguished it markedly from the SI.

Gruppe SPUR's continued faith in the revolutionary potential of art, however, led Kunzelmann, Baldeney, and Gasché to leave the group shortly after its expulsion from the SI.⁴⁹ In December 1962, the three wrote and published 3,000 copies of the first issue of *Unverbindliche Richtlinien* (Non-Binding Instructions), a pamphlet that maintained the radical politics of SPUR, but avoided emphasis on artistic activity.⁵⁰ The publication claimed to offer "instructions" for how individuals might discover, express, and fulfill the long repressed "ur-expectation" of mankind: the chance to lead a "more beautiful—happier—freer—less encumbered—more dynamic life."⁵¹

This first issue owed much to the SI; it even invoked the Situationist idea of the "colonization of everyday life" to describe social domination. The repressive mechanisms of affluent society, the authors argued, concealed the "real needs" of humanity by extending the logic of "organized labor time" into leisure, thus creating an "organized free time" that was itself "a modern variety of labor."⁵² This would be one of the last substantive references to the SI within the radical milieu of West Germany for a long time. The pamphlet's concerns with "marketing psychology" and "administrative activity" demonstrated that the Frankfurt School had supplanted the SI.⁵³ *Unverbindliche Richtlinien* went so far as to declare "knowledge" of Adorno and the Frankfurt School to be the "essential precondition" for orienting oneself critically in advanced industrial society. Critical analysis, they averred, cannot focus on culture

⁴⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," in *The Culture Industry Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 104.

⁴⁹ On their break with Gruppe SPUR, see Wolfgang Dreßen and Eckhard Siepmann, eds., "Interview mit Dieter Kunzelmann," in *Nilpferd des höllischen Urwalds: Situationisten, Gruppe SPUR, Kommune I* (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1991), 154; Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 30.

⁵⁰ The printing was paid for by Gruppe SPUR member, Hans-Peter Zimmer. See Reimann, *Dieter Kunzelmann*, 95.

⁵¹ "Zur Einführung," in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 71.

⁵² "Abrechnung," in *Ibid.*, 75-76.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 83.

itself, but must interrogate the “descent of culture into the culture industry.” Kunzelmann, Baldeney, and Gasché sketched this out in the following way: “Culture is culture industry; culture industry is amusement; amusement is labor; culture industry is organizer free time.” In strikingly Adornian terms, they painted a bleak picture of a society that devoted its entire social energy to erasing any trace of nonconformity, originality, and creativity. “The primary concern of this society is to snap rebellion, to break resistance, to defame utopia,” they declared, “life has forfeited those who are against the forfeiture of life.”⁵⁴

Despite its appeal to Kunzelmann, Baldeney, and Gasché, the work of Adorno and Horkheimer offered them a limited horizon of engagement. The culture industry thesis, for example, is emblematic of the Frankfurt School’s move from a critique of political economy to a critique of instrumental rationality. As Moishe Postone has argued, this shift in focus assumed that “the postliberal social totality had become noncontradictory [...] without any intrinsic historical dynamic.”⁵⁵ This was an extremely pessimistic turn in social thought, to put it mildly. Not only did Adorno and Horkheimer dismiss the revolutionary potential of the working class, but their thesis eliminated the possibility of an emergent contradiction between the levels of culture and industry by collapsing them together. This lack of opening for overt social struggle left Kunzelmann, Baldeney, and Gasché to tenuously conclude that only “total revolt” could effect social transformation.⁵⁶ Despite outlining a three-stage “eschatological program,” *Unverbindliche Richtlinien* was unable to identify a subject of social transformation beyond a vague formulation of a “society of cohorts” whose task it would be to create the pre-conditions for revolution. The turn to the culture industry, while helpful for breaking with the SI’s faith in workers, left unresolved the question of where to find revolutionary agency.

The small group continued on, and by July 1963 had founded cells in Munich, Nuremberg, Hamburg, and Berlin. Now operating under the name Subversive Aktion, they published the second issue of *Unverbindliche Richtlinien* in December 1963. The new issue affirmed their earlier critique of consumer society, but frustration with the impasse in Adorno and Horkheimer’s thought was palpable. “Constant pronouncement of the exiting situation’s hopelessness” and the “mania of perfect analysis,” they declared, was just a way to “absolve” social theorists from making practical interventions.⁵⁷ Subversive Aktion described ideas like instrumental reason and “the perfect fully rationalized world” to be a “myth” whose sole function

⁵⁴ Ibid. Isolated instances of revolt, like the small but highly public riots of the *Halbstarcken*—groups of male working class teenagers who picked fights with another—were presented in *Unverbindliche Richtlinien 1* in a negative light, as an expression of the foreclosed petit-bourgeois dreams of the working class. For more on the *Halbstarcken*, see Sabine Von Dirke, *All Power to the Imagination!: The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 20–27.

⁵⁵ Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 105.

⁵⁶ “Eschatologisches Programm,” in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 91.

⁵⁷ “Aspekte und Konklusionen,” in Ibid., 115.

was to “suffocate” action.⁵⁸ The second issue of *Unverbindliche Richtlinien* emphasized the need to move beyond critique:

CRITIQUE MUST TURN INTO ACTION.
ACTION UNMASKS THE REIGN
OF OPPRESSION.⁵⁹

The pessimism of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* stood in sharp contrast to the declaration that opened the new issue: “[I]n this repressive epoch, the realization of one’s innermost drives and ambitions can only be had through SUBVERSIVE ACTION.”⁶⁰ Rather than locate potential spaces of contradiction within social structures, Subversive Aktion looked inward. This turn was sparked by the work of another member of the Frankfurt School, Herbert Marcuse, specifically his theory of the *Leistungsprinzip*, or “performance principle.”

Marcuse first developed the performance principle in *Eros and Civilization* (1955), his groundbreaking study of advanced industrial society that looked to synthesize Freudian psychoanalysis with historical materialism. Marcuse acknowledged that any social organization of individuals required the partial deferment of pleasure to ensure societal stability, what Freud had termed the reality principle. Within particular modes of production, Marcuse argued, the reality principle generates “additional controls” that are in excess of what is necessary for “civilized human association.”⁶¹ This “surplus repression” inevitably yields domination.⁶² Marcuse termed the prevailing reality principle of advanced industrial society the performance principle, under whose “rule society is stratified according to the competitive economic performances of its members.”⁶³ The defining characteristics of the performance principle were the rationalization of domination and the rapid expansion of alienation beyond labor time. It implied a mode of labor whereby individuals:

[...] work for an apparatus which they do not control, which operates as an independent power to which individuals must submit if they want to live. [...] Men do not live their own lives but perform pre-established functions. While they work, they do not fulfill their own needs and faculties but work in alienation. Work has now become general, and so have the restrictions placed upon libido: labor time, which is the largest part of the individual’s life time, is painful time, for alienated labor is absence of gratification, negation of the pleasure principle. Libido is diverted for socially useful performances in which the individual works for himself only in so far as he works for the apparatus, engaged in activities that mostly do not coincide with his own faculties and desires.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ For them, Adorno’s faith in avant-garde art was “questionable” at best in an industrial society where all products “inevitably decay” into commodities. A world whose “misery” is grounded in “socio-economic conditions cannot be overturned through aesthetic production.” Those “intellectual grumblers” who privilege spheres of activity demonstrate their own “firm entanglement in the existing order.” Ibid., 114–115.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁶⁰ “Repressive Aktion,” in Ibid., 102.

⁶¹ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (London: Routledge, 1998), 37.

⁶² Ibid., 35.

⁶³ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 45.

Marcuse gave special attention to the psychic character of domination, noting how under the performance principle, both “body and mind” became “instruments of alienated labor.”⁶⁵ This could only occur when both labor time and “free” time were alienated and thoroughly regimented. Leisure, so Marcuse contended, had become a category of social life devoted entirely to the “re-creation of energy for work.”⁶⁶ If “left alone” during leisure time, individuals could become aware of their exploitation and potential liberation. Hence why society under the rule of the performance principle developed the entertainment industry, which Marcuse claimed functioned primarily as a “technique of mass manipulation.”⁶⁷

Marcuse’s theory of the performance principle had figured prominently in the first issue of *Unverbindliche Richtlinien*, but only as another way for describing the logic of the culture industry. In their second pamphlet, *Subversive Aktion* embraced the performance principle as a distinct theory of social domination. While Adorno and Horkheimer had eliminated space for contradiction in their thesis of the culture industry, Marcuse had turned to Freud to sketch out the possibility for a non-repressive society, one “based on a fundamentally different experience of being, a fundamentally different relation between man and nature, and fundamentally different existential relations.”⁶⁸ His use of Freudian metapsychology, however, was distinctly at odds with Freud’s basic hypothesis that society is naturally and necessarily repressive.⁶⁹ Marcuse countered that repression hardly resulted from biological instincts. By drawing on Freud’s own method, he insisted that the very instinctual energies identified by Freud contained mankind’s emancipatory potential, or “Eros.” As liberated desire, Eros could release energy that promised to expand and foster more creative forms of social relations. Marcuse refuted Freud’s claim of an inevitable biological conflict between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, between sexuality and culture. Instead, he argued, “the free Eros does not preclude lasting civilized social relationships [...] it repels only the supra-repressive organization of societal relationships under a principle which is the negation of the pleasure principle.” An unchained Eros could help establish “a pleasurable aesthetic-erotic environment” which was nothing short of a “total restructuring of human life and the material conditions of existence.”⁷⁰ Whereas human history had so far offered only repression and social domination, Marcuse found in nature the energy and possibility for new forms of life.

Subversive Aktion embraced Marcuse’s system, going so far as to self-identify as “Freudo-Marxists.”⁷¹ Their analysis of social domination devoted careful attention to the psychic character of repression. They even concluded the second issue by claiming, “Today, for the first time, alienation is internalized.”⁷² With this new understanding of social domination, the authors stressed the need for psychic transformation. This was only achievable, they claimed, by undoing

⁶⁵ Ibid., 47.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 47–48.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 48.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1989).

⁷⁰ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 43.

⁷¹ “Vorwort,” in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 100.

⁷² “Subversive Aktion, oder: VEN-, VID, VICIT,” in Ibid., 120.

the repressive structures that undergirded society, and by liberating one's innermost drives and desires. For Subversive Aktion, the "transformation of the subject" had to accompany the transformation "of his environment."⁷³ As I discuss in Chapter Two, this was an early articulation of the antiauthoritarian reconfiguration of the relation between the objective and subjective conditions of social transformation.

Subversive Aktion's conclusions were certainly in line with Marcuse. But where the Frankfurt School theorist refrained from suggesting any form liberation should take, Subversive Aktion championed a "new tradition of revolt" that amalgamated ideas from psychoanalysis, Marxism, critical theory, and the historical avant-garde.⁷⁴ They envisioned "countless micro-rebellions" that would produce a new anthropological type: "Homo Subversivus." Homo Subversivus was not to be a singular subject, but was a guide for radical self-fashioning based on "critical clarity" and sensual experience. According to Subversive Aktion, Homo Subversivus was a process by which individuals would look "in the mirror and work on themselves" to develop a "subversive psyche" and a "subversive being."⁷⁵ Despite this emphasis on the "self," Homo Subversivus was based on "the belief in the possibility of humanity and the faith in a better world." It anticipated the antiauthoritarian belief that political praxis should be prized for the psychic effect direct action has on those participating. The focus on "micro-rebellions" and the "self" was certainly indicative of a narcissism that would shadow German New Left activist practices. It was also symptomatic of the political landscape in West Germany, which the CDU dominated throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. While social movements had been active in the 1950s against West German rearmament, the possibility for mass organizing—let alone mass revolt—was unimaginable in 1963. Subversive Aktion's "micro" focus was born in reaction to this climate.

Nonetheless, the program put forth in *Unverbindliche Richtlinien* was a modest attempt at intervening on the very level of material culture on which, so Subversive Aktion believed, political and economic structures depended. As the "ring-leader of organized disobedience," Subversive Aktion hoped to coordinate small-scale actions like "consumer boycotts" and the *détournement* of public advertisements.⁷⁶ In a working paper from April 1964, Subversive Aktion presented itself with two main tasks: 1) to experiment with their theory of revolution in "countless experimental actions," and 2) to establish "subversive micro-cells" throughout West and Central Europe.⁷⁷ Their efforts often combined in actions that sought to attract "cohorts" across West Germany. One such action incorporated a virulent critique of the Frankfurt School's

⁷³ Ibid., 121.

⁷⁴ Subversive Aktion explained that their influences drew together a wide variety of thinkers including: "Marx, the complex psychology and the psychoanalytic movement (Abraham, Ferenczi, Freud, Pfister, Reich, Rank, Sadger, Steikel etc.), the Eranos Circle (Eliade, Jung, Buonavita, Kerényi, Neumann, Portmann, Walter F. Otto, Hugo Rahner SJ, Scholem, Zimmer etc.) the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Benjamin, Horkheimer, Krakauer, H. Marcuse), as well as the concerns of subversive literature and of some artistic movements (Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism, and Beat) and all those who are contained by the KODEX SUBVERSIVUS." Ibid., 119.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 119–121.

⁷⁶ They called these "Reklama(k)tionen," a play on the German words "Reklamationen" (reclamations) and "Reklamaktionen" (advertisement actions). "Aspekte und Konklusionen," in Ibid., 116–117.

⁷⁷ "Konklusionen," in Ibid., 133.

narrow view of praxis. In May 1964, Subversive Aktion posted “Wanted Ads” in Munich, Stuttgart, Tübingen, and Berlin, primarily on university campuses. The posters featured provocative slogans from Adorno, Horkheimer, and André Breton such as, “There can be no covenant with this world; we belong to it only to the extent that we rebel against it,” and “All are unfree under the illusion of being free.”⁷⁸ It concluded with the message, “We believe that knowledge is not enough. If you too find the discrepancy between analysis and action to be intolerable, write to the following address with the reference ‘Antithesis.’” At the very bottom of the poster, Subversive Aktion attributed the flier to Theodor Adorno and included his address in Frankfurt am Main. Their action did not go unnoticed by Adorno. His colleague Ernst Bloch had learned from one of his students who had made the posters and told Adorno. The Frankfurt School professor pressed charges against Kunzelmann and fellow Subversive Aktion member Frank Böckelmann, forcing both to pay DM 100 fines.⁷⁹ The action was the first of many confrontations between this younger generation and the figures to whom they owed their “revolutionary self-understanding.”⁸⁰ And like the later confrontations, this intervention was motivated by an impatience with the presumed distinction between theory and practice.

Anschlag’s Dialectical Counterpoints

Shortly after founding Subversive Aktion in the summer of 1963, Rudolphe Gasché moved from Munich to West Berlin to study philosophy at the Free University Berlin (FU). Together with Herbert Nagel, a friend from Luxemburg also enrolled at the FU, the pair organized the West Berlin micro-cell of Subversive Aktion. The first people they invited to join were Bernd Rabehl and Rudi Dutschke, both East German refugees Nagel had befriended at the FU.⁸¹ Rabehl and Dutschke fled to West Berlin in 1960 and 1961 respectively after finding their options for studying in the East Germany severely limited. Dutschke himself arrived just days before the Berlin Wall was erected on August 13, 1961. Authorities in East Germany had barred Dutschke from attending university in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) after he refused to serve in the military and encouraged several friends to follow suit. Upon arriving in the Federal Republic, Dutschke’s philosophical education began with Sartre and Heidegger, typical for the time. His upbringing in East Germany left Dutschke averse to the Marxist tradition, until a sociology seminar in 1962 introduced him to the work of Georg Luckács.⁸²

⁷⁸ See a reproduction of the flier “Suchanzeige 1” in *Ibid.*, 145.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 146; Gretchen Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke: Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben* (Munich: Droemer Knaur, 1998), 50–51; Lorenz Jäger, *Adorno: A Political Biography*, trans. Stewart Spencer (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004), 194–195.

⁸⁰ “Brief von Frank Böckelmann an Steffen Schulze vom 17.8.1964,” in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 160.

⁸¹ Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke*, 48–52.

⁸² Rudi Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke aufrecht gehen - 1968 und der libertäre Kommunismus*, ed. Helmut Reinicke, Karl-Heinz Dellwo, and Willi Baer (Hamburg: Laika-Verlag, 2012), 37. “The Marxist philosopher from Hungary enthused Rudi like Heidegger never had,” his wife Gretchen recalls in her biography of Dutschke. Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke*, 92.

From the start, the West Berlin cell distinguished itself from the rest of Subversive Aktion. Rabehl and Dutschke's interest in figures like Lukács, Karl Korsch, Rosa Luxemburg, and the history of European worker's movements set them apart from the group's more bohemian members in Munich. This difference was exemplified in the contrast between Dutschke and Rabehl's studiousness and the eccentric behavior of the bearded autodidact Kunzelmann.⁸³ In February 1964, the West Berlin cell circulated a flier at the FU criticizing the recent election of a member of a dueling fraternity to the highest office of student government.⁸⁴ Kunzelmann responded by sending an incensed letter to the West Berlin cell threatening to expel them for agitating "on such a banal level." His critique focused on both the target of their flier and its dry style. He concluded by disdainfully referring to the West Berlin cell as a "new student group."⁸⁵ In Kunzelmann's opinion, if the revolutionary potential of workers was unlikely, then the notion of students as a transformative social force was absurd. Students in Germany had been an extremely conservative population historically. Moreover, the hierarchical and authoritarian structures of universities in postwar West Germany hardly made for auspicious political terrain.

Though Dutschke remained unconvinced by Kunzelmann's opinion of students, he took the criticism seriously. At the time, Dutschke was still trying acquaint himself with Subversive Aktion's method of engagement, which was foreign to his experiences in East Germany. "The objections of the comrade from Munich can't simply be thrown out," wrote Dutschke in his journal, "But I was not a Situationist. In [East Germany] I didn't have the opportunity."⁸⁶ Several events in the coming months challenged Kunzelmann's cynicism towards West German students. In March 1964, 1,500 students took the streets after police arrested 6 students during a small West Berlin demonstration against the reappointment of the former Nazi Party member Heinrich Lübke as president of the Federal Republic. On July 1, the eve of the election, the West Berlin cell of Subversive Aktion posted fliers against Lübke. On the walls near one voting precinct, they even graffitied a satirical poem about him.⁸⁷ It was Subversive Aktion's most forceful intervention up to that point, and one that took to heart Kunzelmann's stylistic critique.

Meanwhile, the Munich cell's rhetoric grew increasingly extreme. A working paper they authored in April 1964 voiced a fervent rejection of all traditional forms of social transformation. They dismissed all "hopes for a legal, democratic path" to "realize a repressionless society" and complained that any reformist approach would take an unnecessarily long time.⁸⁸ They insisted that a "free society" could be created "in a span of a month to a half year."⁸⁹ In addition, they heightened their criticism of workers, describing the proletariat as the "chimera of a revolutionary class." The rejection of both reform and class struggle led the Munich cell to

⁸³ See Bernd Rabehl's account of the first time he and Dutschke met Kunzelmann, in Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 38–44.

⁸⁴ See a reproduction of the flier, "Es lädt ein: Hac(k)e(n)-Cruc TEUTONICA-(schlagende Verbindung) zu einer urdeutschen Met-Shuffle," in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 148.

⁸⁵ "Brief von Dieter Kunzelmann an die Berliner vom 12.5.1964," in *Ibid.*, 149.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke*, 50.

⁸⁷ See the flier and graffiti text reproduced in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 150–151.

⁸⁸ "Konklusionen," in *Ibid.*, 132.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

proclaim the necessity of a “total antithesis of the Existing.”⁹⁰ They had little interest in building a mass movement, but preferred to devise ways to combat the “manipulation of consciousness in the daily 16 hours of ‘leisure-time’” that made it possible for each individual to be “their own McCarthy.”⁹¹ Instead of the “socio-historical Thermidor,” they focused their attention on the “psychic-Thermidor.” In short, the Munich cell privileged liberation from the performance principle over concern for socioeconomic structures. Their increasing disdain for practical interventions did not go unopposed within Subversive Aktion. In West Berlin, Rabehl and Dutschke had started the International Working Group with visiting students from Latin America, Haiti, and Ethiopia. Together they discussed new and classic Marxist texts alongside revolutionary developments in the Third World.⁹²

Just ahead of a July 1964 meeting of all the micro-cells in West Berlin, Dutschke circulated a discussion paper to all of Subversive Aktion that contested the Munich cell’s Aktion’s theory of social domination, particularly its emphasis on individual “psychic change” as the single avenue for transforming society.⁹³ Dutschke shared the larger group’s doubts about the working class in West Germany, but he contended that the absence of a revolutionary proletariat at home was no sign that another revolutionary subject did not exist elsewhere in the world. Just because affluence had made the working class in continental Europe unable to conceive of itself as an object of economic exploitation hardly meant that the contradictions of capitalism as a global totality had been entirely smoothed over on the political economic level. Dutschke argued that a properly dialectical analysis of society made clear that West Germany’s affluence depended on the exploitation of the Third World. One only needs to look beyond the borders of Europe to “the exploitation of workers and farmers in Latin America, Africa, and Asia,” he wrote, to find a revolutionary subject that can experience itself as “an object in the old sense, as a thinking animal that is threatened daily by starvation.”⁹⁴ Given the increasingly global operation of capital, Dutschke argued that any analysis of life in the Federal Republic “will already be reactionary” if it neglects the Third World. To discount the revolutionary potential of the “organized masses” in the Third World would be “false and dangerous.”⁹⁵ Though written as an intervention into Subversive Aktion, Dutschke’s paper was a turning point in the emergence of the German New Left. It was one of the first calls for activists to recognize how the plight of the Third World was tied to conditions in West Germany.

The ideas articulated in the paper would ultimately lead to Subversive Aktion’s split. In a letter to a friend written in late August, Frank Böckelman from the Munich cell described two emerging camps within Subversive Aktion. There was his group in Munich, who prioritized the

⁹⁰ Ibid., 134.

⁹¹ Ibid., 133.

⁹² Rudi Dutschke, “Die Widersprüche Des Spätkapitalismus, Die Antiautoritären Studenten Und Ihr Verhältnis Zur Dritten Welt,” in *Rebellion Der Studenten Oder Die Neue Opposition*, ed. Uwe Bergmann et al. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), 62; Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke*, 58.

⁹³ A revised version of this letter would be published later under the title “Das Verhältnis von Theorie und Praxis” in Subversive Aktion’s new publication, *Anschlag*. See Böckelman and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 190–195..

⁹⁴ Ibid., 192.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 194.

“psychic basis of the performance-society [*Leistungsgesellschaft*],” and then there was the “Berlin School” led by Dutschke and Rabehl who were guided by primarily political and economic concerns.⁹⁶ These seeming antinomies would not prove entirely irreconcilable; in fact, the tension between these two modes of thought would define the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling in the years to come.

At the meeting of Subversive Aktion in West Berlin, members attempted to square the differing positions by claiming to privilege neither the economic nor the psychic level.⁹⁷ In doing so, they drew a crucial distinction between psyche and consciousness, describing the latter as “subjective self-understanding” and presenting the former as an objective condition of reality itself. “We do not intervene in consciousness in order to transform reality,” Subversive Aktion wrote in a collectively authored report from the meeting, “instead we intervene in reality in order to change consciousness.” This pseudo-materialist declaration allowed them to conceive of the psyche—drives, the internalization of social norms, etc.—as a terrain of political intervention, which, like other social conditions, could be transformed through action. They maintained a Lukácsian understanding of the relationship between consciousness and struggle, while clarifying how instinctual drives and the internalization of repressive social norms could inhibit political mobilization. According to this line of thought, the psyche was not simply part of the “superstructure.” Nor was it thoroughly determined by material conditions. For Subversive Aktion, the psyche was a material condition itself that existed in a mutually dependent relation to the economic sphere. Their highly unorthodox synthesis of psychoanalysis, existentialism, and Marxist thought led them to declare:

Although today the possibility of intervening in the economic base is limited, we are not allowed to disregard the correlation between advanced industrialized and developing social structures. We must certainly realize that this society is in the position to undergo a re-structuring of the economic base in terms of its repressive ideology: psychic transformation is alone both the condition of possibility and the realization of emancipated society.⁹⁸

If, following Marcuse, the economic structure of advanced industrial society both determined but also depended upon the performance principle, then disrupting the performance principle by intervening on the psychic level could theoretically transform the economic sphere. Subversive Aktion concluded that such an understanding should be the premise for any subsequent analysis and action.

Subversive Aktion set for itself the task of determining whether society was “less immune” to intervention in the “psychic sphere” than it was in the “economic structure.”⁹⁹ Although they maintained that their current historical moment did not allow for “revolutionary interventions,” Subversive Aktion insisted that their “concept of praxis” was not “limited to a revolutionary

⁹⁶ Frank Böckelmann credited the West Berlin cell with introducing Subversive Aktion to the work of Wilhelm Reich, who Böckelmann celebrated as offering “the only attempt” until Subversive Aktion “to integrate psychoanalysis into Marxism.” “Brief von Frank Böckelmann an Steffen Schulze vom 17.8.1964,” in *Ibid.*, 161.

⁹⁷ “Berliner Protokoll vom 10.7.1964,” in *Ibid.*, 157.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 159.

epoch.” In a significant revision of statements the Munich cell made just months earlier, they claimed their praxis to be preparatory, oriented for a revolutionary situation that was to come. It involved forming cells and testing out new tactics to ready themselves for social revolution. Such preparations, they claimed, could help fend off the “resignation” that a long “standby” period might produce.¹⁰⁰ The emphasis on developing a “pre-praxis to praxis” did not, however, satisfy the growing circle around Dutschke and Rabehl. The West Berlin cell’s global perspective and ties to students from Third World countries convinced them of the revolutionary potential of the present historical moment.

Despite these earnest attempts to reconcile the competing positions within Subversive Aktion, tensions grew. Dutschke raised the ire of many when he included a revised version of his working paper in the first issue of Subversive Aktion’s new journal *Anschlag* (Attack) without informing the Munich cell ahead of time.¹⁰¹ The contributions to the issue clearly evidenced the growing rift. Dutschke and Rabehl—using pseudonyms because of their East German nationality—offered Marxist humanist perspectives on imperialism and social democracy, while Böckelmann and Kunzelmann provided cultural criticism, which included an analysis of a recent James Bond film. The issue prompted a fiery exchange of letters between Böckelmann and Dutschke. Against Dutschke’s insistence that Subversive Aktion should work to mobilize mass political action, Böckelmann argued that their “duty” was to bring “people to recognize their position.” In Böckelmann’s opinion, Subversive Aktion should devote its energy to thought-provoking fliers, not protests and public provocations. No longer was the “struggle for the emancipation of people [...] synonymous” with the “struggle against capitalists,” he claimed. The real adversary was the very principle of “abstract profit interests.”¹⁰² Forms of organization and intervention that had been useful for workers in the nineteenth century, Böckelmann argued, were inappropriate in a highly administered and affluent society where an individual not only lacked control of the means of production, but had “lost himself.”¹⁰³

Dutschke agreed that new forms of action were needed; however, he insisted that such tactics needed to take into account the existence of a new world revolutionary subject. According to Dutschke, his difference with Böckelmann was of “methodological nature.” He mockingly claimed to not even be able to tell “what method” Böckelmann employed.¹⁰⁴ Dutschke went so far as to accuse Böckelmann’s cultural criticism as smacking of the positivism that should be

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 157.

¹⁰¹ The issue was funded through sales of pirated copies of texts like Reich’s *Psychoanalysis and Marxism*, and Karl Korsch’s *Marxism and Philosophy*. See Ibid., 167; 197.

¹⁰² “Rundschreiben von Frank Böckelmann aus Kalikutt vom 24-27.8.1964,” in Ibid., 206–207.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 206. Even if Dutschke’s analysis was true and struggles in the Third World anticipated an “economic and political upheaval” that would transform Europe, Böckelmann contended, “we can hardly participate or influence these processes.” In a striking display of condescension, Böckelmann argued that “analysis of Europe’s socio-psychic mechanisms” in 1964 could be relevant for helping those in Brazil, the Congo, or Indonesia understand their own society, but only fifteen years down the line (209).

¹⁰⁴ “Brief von Rudi Dutschke an Frank Böckelmann vom 26.8.1964,” in Ibid., 199.

their “mortal enemy.” In doing so, he defended dialectical thought as “the single adequate instrument for exposing and overcoming contradictions in bourgeois capitalist society.”¹⁰⁵

The rival camps reached a temporary compromise at a meeting in Hamburg in late September 1964 when Subversive Aktion committed itself to engaging Third World struggles.¹⁰⁶ Some members even began collaborating with the Socialist German Students League (SDS) while others experimented with direct action. The rift within Subversive Aktion continued to widen, however, and the Berlin cell even began organizing under the name of their journal, *Anschlag*. *Anschlag*'s increased involvement with the SDS further estranged them from the rest of Subversive Aktion.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, Kunzelmann had come around to Dutschke and Rabehl's position. As the student movement in West Germany gained steam in early 1965 and protests in solidarity with Third World struggles became common, Böckelmann and others in Subversive Aktion looked askance at the “class-struggle ideology” favored by *Anschlag*.¹⁰⁸ Tensions finally came to a head in April 1965 when the Munich cell expelled Kunzelmann on the grounds of his involvement with “workerist” groups in Munich.¹⁰⁹ Kunzelmann's solidarity with Dutschke and Rabehl had put the Subversive Aktion co-founder at odds with the rest of the Munich cell.¹¹⁰ Both Dutschke and Rabehl had skipped the April meeting, and at the end of May, they quite the group.¹¹¹

Historian Wolfgang Kraushaar attributes the split within Subversive Aktion to an unbridgeable divide between psychoanalytically-inflected existentialism and historical materialism. “Subjective attempts at liberation,” he concludes, “became increasingly incommensurable with the deterministic class analytic and finally led to the end of the group.”¹¹² He even goes so far as to argue that the rift anticipated the fate of West German antiauthoritarianism as a whole. Yet given the productive tension that would exist between psychoanalysis and Marxism in the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, it seems more apt to treat Subversive Aktion not as a portent of things to come, but revelatory of the historical conditions that allowed for the later attempted syntheses to emerge.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 200.

¹⁰⁶ “Hamburger Protokoll vom 26-30.9.1964,” in Ibid., 224–225.

¹⁰⁷ On the entrance of Subversive Aktion into the SDS, see Ibid., 262–265; Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2011), 57; Siegwald Lönnendonker, Bernd Rabehl, and Jochen Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund Nach Der Trennung Von Der SPD*, vol. 1: 1960–67 (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 198–199.

¹⁰⁸ “Aus einem Brief von Frank Böckelmann an Christofer Baldeney vom 14.6.1965,” in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 295.

¹⁰⁹ Kunzeman was expelled with another member, Marion Steffel-Stergar. “Ausschlussprotokol,” in Ibid., 300-301.

¹¹⁰ “Kritik des Idealismus der ‘GWS’,” in Ibid., 303.

¹¹¹ Dutschke was in Moscow as part of an SDS delegation sent to meet with student leaders in Russia and Rabehl claimed to be ill. Kunzelmann's expulsion sparked arguments within *Anschlag* itself. “Dieter alienated many people in his actions and in the group, and he had no theory. For me, it's more important to develop theory,” Herbet Nagel explained. Rabehl responded, “The group stops being a group if we individualize the actions.” Quoted in Ibid., 72.

¹¹² Kraushaar, “Kinder einer abenteuerlichen Dialektik,” 26.

“...the Beginning of Our Cultural Revolution”

Neither Subversive Aktion nor Gruppe SPUR would play a consequential role in the German New Left after 1965. Nonetheless, both were crucibles for a theory of social transformation that broke with previous leftist traditions and took culture as a central terrain of intervention. As I have ventured to show here, SPUR and Subversive Aktion’s concept of culture encompassed the material and psychic conditions that were constitutive of everyday life in postwar society. Together with the absence of a revolutionary subject in Western Europe, the changing character of social domination occasioned a felt need for cultural revolution. This demanded new modes of engagement that better reflected the increasingly international terrain of struggle. Writing at the height of the German New Left in 1968, Dutschke would identify a demonstration against the visit of the Congolese Prime Minister Moise Tshombe to West Berlin on December 18, 1964 as exemplary of this new praxis.

Tshombe’s brief trip was full of the pomp and circumstance one would expect to accompany the visit of a fiercely anti-communist foreign dignitary to the Western front of the Cold War. It included meetings with notable politicians, fancy meals with leading industrialists, and even a tour of the recently constructed Berlin Wall. At the time, Tshombe was no stranger to the goodwill of Western governments: four years earlier, the then-separatist president of the resource-rich Congolese province of Katanga had received aid from both Belgium and the Central Intelligence Agency to depose and abduct the Congo’s first democratically-elected prime minister Patrice Lumumba. The anti-colonialist Lumumba was eventually murdered by a Belgian firing squad in Katanga in early 1961.¹¹³ Tshombe assumed power of the Congo soon after. West Berlin was just one stop on Tshombe’s tour through Western Europe aimed at raising development investments from allied governments and businesses. Already in Paris, Naples, Rome, and Munich, thousands had mobilized in protest against him.¹¹⁴

A similar reception awaited Tshombe when he touched down in West Berlin on December 18. Some eight hundred demonstrators had gathered outside Tempelhof Airport that Friday morning at 10:00AM to welcome the Congolese despot.¹¹⁵ In the weeks leading up to his visit, magazines and newspapers popular among politically engaged students had featured detailed

¹¹³ On Lumumba’s murder see Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (London; New York: Verso, 2001). News of Lumumba’s murder prompted protests internationally in February 1961, including in West Germany. See Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, 176; Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 65–79.

¹¹⁴ The most significant confrontation took place in Rome when one hundred and thirty demonstrators were arrested after fights broke out between communists, rightists, and police in front of the Italian parliament. See Slobodian, *Foreign front*, 65.

¹¹⁵ For accounts of the demonstration, see: Dokument 361, “Zum Verlauf der Demonstration gegen den Empfang Tschombés durch den Regierenden Bürgermeister von Berlin,” reprinted in Siegwald Lönnendonker and Tilman Fichter, *Freie Universität Berlin, 1948- 1973: Hochschule Im Umbruch*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Pressestelle d. FU Berlin, 1973), 179; Timothy S Brown, “‘1968’ East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History,” *American Historical Review*, no. 114 (February 2009): 74–75; Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 56–57; Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:199–201; Slobodian, *Foreign front*, 65–71; “Plötzlich Wurde Das Gesicht Tschombes Star,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, December 21, 1964.

reports of the atrocities for which Tshombe was responsible.¹¹⁶ Tshombe himself seemed to personify the workings of the imperialist dialectic Dutschke had debated within Subversive Aktion.¹¹⁷ The African Student Union and the Latin American League had organized the protest together with several leftist student groups. The SDS alone distributed 8,000 fliers detailing Tshombe's crimes and the Western corporations and governments that backed him.¹¹⁸ Working with Anschlag and the International Working Group, Dutschke and Rabehl released their own flier, which called Tshombe a "murderer."¹¹⁹

Organizers had received police permission to hold a demonstration at *Platz der Luftbrücke* outside the airport and the protest began as had been planned, as a "silent demonstration." But when police decided to escort Tshombe from the airport to a reception with Mayor Willy Brandt at City Hall using an unannounced route, something nearly unheard of in West Germany transpired: demonstrators defied the orders of authorities and broke through the police barricades. As one small group blocked traffic on Mehringdamm Avenue, hundreds more hurried toward City Hall some five kilometers away in Schöneberg. Officers managed to establish a barrier to keep demonstrators from entering and occupying the building, but chants and catcalls quickly escalated into scuffles with police. The spontaneous sequence of events were modestly effective. Just before his appointment with Tshombe, Brandt agreed to meet with a small delegation of the protesting foreign students. Out of respect for their complaints, he cut his meeting with Tshombe to fifteen minutes, which Tshombe and the press read as a snub.¹²⁰ As he left City Hall, several students pelted the Tshombe's car with tomatoes purchased from a nearby market.

Compared to the turbulent demonstrations that would soon consume West Germany, the Tshombe protest was relatively tame. But it marked a crucial moment in the emergence of the German New Left. The willingness of a large group of demonstrators to spontaneously violate the orders of police had been, for the most part, previously unthinkable in postwar West Germany. Dutschke and Rabehl viewed the event as a watershed moment. Some three years later, Dutschke lauded demonstrators for their "readiness" and "collective resolve to fight against the fetishized game rules of formal democracy."¹²¹ Rabehl likewise saw in the breaking of "the 'staid' rules of the game of democracy" a unique chance for activists to create demonstrations

¹¹⁶ See for example: Gerd Heidemann and Ernst Petry, "Auf Der Straße Der Landsknechte," *Stern*, November 29, 1964; Michael Luft, "Kongo-Greuel," *Konkret*, December 1964.

¹¹⁷ As historian Timothy Brown notes, the anti-Tshombe protests took aim at "[Tshombe's] abysmal human rights record; but they were also protesting against the persistence of colonial domination in the Third World, against the straitjacket of the bloc system, and against the stifling anti-communism of West Germany." Brown, "'1968' East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History," 74.

¹¹⁸ "Schweigedemonstration!" Archiv "APO und soziale Bewegungen" Freie Universität Berlin, Otto-Suhr-Institut für Politikwissenschaft (APO-A), "A.K. Privatbesitz. SDS. Arbeitskreise" folder. For a summary of the flier, see Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:200.

¹¹⁹ Aktion für internationale Solidarität, "Was hat der Mörder Tschombe bei uns zu suchen?" (1964) reprinted in Jürgen Miermeister and Jochen Staadt, eds., *Provokationen: die Studenten- und Jugendrevolte in ihren Flugblättern 1965-1971* (Darmstadt; Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1980), 75.

¹²⁰ See Slobodian, *Foreign front*, 69–70.

¹²¹ Rudi Dutschke, "Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus," in *Rebellion Der Studenten Oder Die Neue Opposition*, ed. Uwe Bergmann et al. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), 63.

that resonated with society.¹²² The significance of the Tshombe protest did not rest in the fact that demonstrators broke the law in and of itself. Drawing on his own experiences that day, Dutschke described the subjective effect disobedience had on those who participated. As his first illegal demonstration, the Anti-Tshombe protest was like an awakening for Dutschke, “self-enlightenment through action.”¹²³ In an article for *Anschlag*, Dutschke had argued it necessary to see affluent society as the “dialectical counterpoint” to the exploitation of Latin America, Africa and Asia.¹²⁴ The experience of the Tshombe demonstration, he now argued, had created just such a recognition by making “the Third World alive in the practical and critical activity of the workers and students.”¹²⁵ The physical experience of spontaneously transgressing the “fetishized game rules” set by liberal society, Dutschke claimed, made possible a psychological “break-through” that could not be had through reflection, discussion, or any other type of rational deliberation.¹²⁶ The experience led him to describe the demonstration as an opportunity for “self-experience” that had led to a profound moment of “self-empowerment.” Just by acting, his “mistrust of the state-societal order was enhanced.” In Dutschke’s opinion, the protest had been, “the beginning of our cultural revolution, in which all previous values and norms were thrown into question. Those involved in the action concentrated primarily on themselves, and in action, their self-awareness developed about the sense and goal of the action.”¹²⁷ The Tshombe protest seemed to encapsulate in practice the theories of cultural revolution that Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion had debated for nearly seven years.

The Will to Consume

Dutschke’s association of cultural revolution with the unsettling of “values and norms” anticipated later historiographic treatments that paint the German New Left as having laid the foundation for what Jürgen Habermas called the “fundamental liberalization” of West German society.¹²⁸ As discussed in my introduction, Habermas characterizes the events of the 1960s as a “cultural revolution.”¹²⁹ Quinn Slobodian has understandably argued that this historiographic strategy “retroactively tames the radical impulses of the protest movement and transforms the contemporary demand of many socialist students for the seizure of state power into the call for a

¹²² Bernd Rabehl, “Von Der Antiautoritäre Bewegung Zur Sozialistischen Opposition,” in *Rebellion Der Studenten Oder Die Neue Opposition*, ed. Uwe Bergmann et al. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), 160.

¹²³ Dutschke, “Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus,” 63.

¹²⁴ A.J. [Rudi Dutschke], “Die Rolle der antikapitalistischen, wenn auch nicht sozialistischen Sowjetunion für die Marxistischen Sozialisten in der Welt,” in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*, 169..

¹²⁵ Dutschke, “Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus,” 64.

¹²⁶ Dutschke, “Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus,” 64.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹²⁸ Jürgen Habermas, “Political Culture in Germany since 1968: An Interview with Dr. Rainer Erd for the Frankfurter Rundschau,” in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate*, ed. Shierry Weber Nicholson, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1989), 184. This interview originally appeared in Jürgen Habermas, “Der Marsch Durch Die Institutionen Hat Auch Die CDU Erreicht,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, March 11, 1988.

¹²⁹ Habermas, “Political Culture in Germany since 1968,” 184. See the introduction to this dissertation for more on the cultural revolution evaluation.

more robust civil society and a more humane form of capitalism.”¹³⁰ Without dismissing what I read as the upshot of Habermas’ comments—that the German New Left played a crucial role in consolidating the subjective conditions necessary for late capitalism—we do need to distinguish between Habermas’ historiographic strategy and Dutschke’s narratological decision.

Unlike later historiographic evaluations, Dutschke’s characterization of the German New Left as a “cultural revolution” was not a post-hoc assessment. First published in the collection *Rebellion der Studenten oder Die neue Opposition* in May 1968, which sold over 180,000 copies, Dutschke issued his categorization *in media res*. Instead of using “cultural revolution” as a “retroactive” category for preparing “a balance sheet” history of the German New Left, he was articulating a still emergent political project that looked to undo the psychic character of social domination.¹³¹ His account was as descriptive as it was aspirational.

The cultural revolution Dutschke articulated was an extension of what Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion had proposed. It is best understood as a response to the revolution in behavior, norms, and values occasioned by the reconfiguration of capital in postwar Western Europe. Cultural revolution, for Vladimir Lenin who coined the term in his final published essay, “On Cooperation” (1923), constituted a crucial aspect of any revolutionary process. It was, he argued, not distinct from, but intimately tied to the ultimate success of a “political and social revolution.” Moreover, a cultural revolution bore upon more than artistic production; it required, first and foremost, “educational work.” For example, instead of prescribing what books should be read, Lenin envisioned a more fundamental cultural revolution that entailed first “training the population to acquire the habit of reading books.”¹³² In Fredric Jameson’s helpful reading, Lenin’s emphasis on habit presented cultural revolution as “the process [...] in which the formation of revolutionary subjectivity is transformed into the restructuring of collective subjectivities along the logic of a new mode of production.”¹³³ Near the end of his life, Lenin argued that completing the proletarian reorganization of society required more than altering political structures and seizing the means of production. It demanded developing new social relations, reconfiguring everyday life, and transforming interpersonal modes of being.

Certainly, the atrocities committed by Stalin and Mao under the banner of “cultural revolution” give the term a deeply troubling connotation. Moreover, historical experiences like these should leave one wary of any project instituted by an established hegemon that aims at the transformation of subjectivity and everyday life. But Lenin theorized a cultural revolution that would herald and sustain socioeconomic transformation. His thoughts were undoubtedly shaped by the Bolshevik revolution. Having already wrested control of the state and the production

¹³⁰ Slobodian, *Radical Empathy: The Third World and the New Left in 1960s West Germany*, 7.

¹³¹ For an example of the “balance sheet” approach to New Left historiography, see Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Achtundsechzig: eine Bilanz* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2008).

¹³² Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “On Cooperation,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, 1923, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1923/jan/06.htm>.

¹³³ Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (London; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2010), 267. Jameson also helpfully notes that this emphasis on “habit,” and by extension, “cultural revolution” should not be seen as simply an afterthought for Lenin. In *State and Revolution*, Lenin also emphasizes the changes of habit that will accompany and complete revolutionary transformations in politics and society (270).

apparatus, the revolutionary process had been reversed in the Soviet case, meaning, “the political and social revolution preceded the cultural revolution.” But what would it mean for cultural revolution to be, as Jameson calls, “training for political revolution, cultural revolution not merely as subversion of the existing order but also of preparatory construction of another one and of a new subjectivity.”¹³⁴ It is this type of a cultural revolution that inhered in Dutschke’s aspirational description of the Tshombe demonstration as “the beginning of our cultural revolution.”

And as I have endeavored to show, Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion’s desire for cultural revolution responded to the revolution in behaviors, attitudes, and values that accompanied the *Wirtschaftswunder*—what Jameson calls the “psychic habitus” that must accompany any profound transformation in social and economic life. The architect of the *Wirtschaftswunder*, Ludwig Erhard, placed remarkable emphasis on such psychic conditioning, even detailing its significance in the best-selling social market handbook *Wohlstand für Alle*. Published in 1957, Erhard’s text sought to explain West Germany’s seemingly miraculous economic growth in the postwar period. He opened the book by articulating his desire as Finance Minister to create “an economic structure within which it would be possible to lead ever widening circles of the German people towards prosperity.” Throughout the text, Erhard argued that affluence in West Germany could only be achieved through a fundamental transformation of social life. “[T]he old conservative social structure,” he declared, must be replaced with “broadly based mass-purchasing power.”¹³⁵ West Germans must develop what he termed “the will to consume.”¹³⁶ Bringing affluence to West Germany was for Erhard simultaneously a material and a moral project, predicated on restoring the individual freedom that had been robbed by “the soulless economic *dirigisme*” of the Third Reich. “What could be more human,” he asked, “than to consume and to enjoy in the full flush of one’s renascent energies?”¹³⁷

To secure this “will to consume,” Erhard looked to the mutually determining relationship between behavior and the economy. “[T]he whole structure of the economy,” he declared, “changes considerably according to our actions and attitudes.” Yet Erhard did not suggest behavior be used to predict the direction of the economy. He went several steps further, claiming that “actions and attitudes” could be shaped through “psychological campaigns” that would push the economy in desired directions.¹³⁸ For Erhard, psychology had to be treated as “indispensible” for developing and sustaining proper consumption patterns.¹³⁹ His “psychological campaign of economic reasoning” was hardly a hidden conspiracy.¹⁴⁰ It was a highly public and purposeful effort:

In brief, my aim is, through constant talks about prices, and through repeated public statements, to prevent the eruption of an economic sickness and to localize any crisis. In

¹³⁴ Ibid., 269.

¹³⁵ Erhard, *Prosperity Through Competition*, 1.1

¹³⁶ Ibid., 169.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 171.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 178.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 178.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 183.

such an unstable situation price trends have to be mentioned daily, so that people might become immune to an epidemic of wild price increases. It is not a case of faith-healing for the German economy. Far from it. But I must repeat once more: the attitude of the people is and remains decisive.¹⁴¹

Erhard believed his approach was just one of many ways to condition the psychology of consumers. Whether “people act differently” because fiscal policy forces them to do so or because “psychological methods” succeed in “changing the attitudes of people” was “in the final instance unimportant.”¹⁴² All that mattered for Erhard was that people consumed in ways that best suited the market economy.

We would do well to keep in mind that Erhard’s text was more than a portrait of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. Just like the “effective performativity” Donald MacKenzie attributes to contemporary financial models, Erhard’s text was less an attempt to describe the market than to mold it.¹⁴³ Exemplary of this effort were his appeals to his West German readership to “not forget the long period of want” of the 1940s and to keep in mind that a “well-functioning economy” would do away with the worries that “enslave” and “imprison” people.¹⁴⁴ Erhard averred:

Only as a result of a secure material basis will men become free and ready for higher things. If we are today striving for new forms of civilization and culture, then in this broad spiritual discussion, particularly with [East Germany], we shall only begin to succeed if men find that inner freedom and satisfaction which alone can guarantee true freedom. An economic policy which aims at increasing prosperity must, of necessity, be a good foundation for this goal.¹⁴⁵

In short, he claimed that the only way to achieve a culture that promotes “inner freedom” was to bolster prosperity. But prosperity, he insisted, depended on proper attitudes, behaviors, and values.

Erhard’s book exemplifies a desire to fashion the “psychic habitus” of a population for the purposes of shaping economic life. Even though Erhard was the architect of the *Wirtschaftswunder* and would go on to become Chancellor, *Wohlstand für Alle* is not evidence in itself of something like Marcuse’s theory of psychic domination. It does, however, go some way to explain the historical conditions under which Gruppe SPUR and Subversive Aktion operated. Creating a mode of being appropriate to given economic conditions is always crucial to the success of a given system of capital accumulation. Erhard’s statements evidence, if not the existence of a cultural revolution in postwar West Germany, then at the very least the desire for one. Cultural revolution in this case was not separate from economic and political transformation. It was part and parcel of it. Thus, when we speak of the cultural revolution

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 184. Erhard even expressed ambition to author a “textbook of systemic guidance for the economy” once “more experience had been gained” (179).

¹⁴² Ibid., 183. He himself claimed to prefer “methods of psychological persuasion” since they more humanely operate through “common sense” rather than exigency.

¹⁴³ Donald A MacKenzie, *An Engine, not a Camera: How Financial Models Shape Markets* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 172.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 173.

aspired to by SPUR and Subversive Aktion, we should not dismiss it as merely cultural, or for that matter, lacking political and economic aspirations. This is just one of the lessons we can learn from West Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder*.

CHAPTER TWO

Anti-Fascism, Decolonization, and the Antiauthoritarian Personality

This chapter examines how the legacy of fascism inflected the emergence of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling in the German New Left, and how antiauthoritarianism has, in turn, conditioned the legacy of the New Left more generally. As described in Chapter One, the state-coordinated drive for economic prosperity in 1950s West Germany with its attendant cultural revolution sidelined substantive public reckoning with the country's fascist past.¹ By the decade's end, the public silence around Nazism began to thaw, helped along by the generation born under and immediately after the Third Reich.

In November 1959, the German Socialist Students League (SDS) organized a controversial exhibition of original source material documenting the service many current West German judicial officials had performed for the Nazi regime. At its opening in Karlsruhe, Reinhard Strecker, the main curator of *Ungesühnte Nazijustiz* (Unredeemed Nazi Justice), caused a public stir by detailing how fifty acting judges and prosecutors in West Germany had worked for the Nazis, issuing death sentences and condemning many to concentration camps. Strecker and the SDS hoped the exhibition—which toured West Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom—would pressure the government to reopen cases against many of these officials and raise awareness of the continuities between the Federal Republic and the Third Reich.²

Ungesühnte Nazijustiz challenged the claims of leading politicians who hailed West Germany's prosperous transition to a market economy and liberal democracy as evidence of the nation's clean break with its fascist past. Assertions that the Nazi capitulation constituted a *Stunde Null* or Zero Hour for Germany were tenuous at best; they conveniently downplayed the presence of former Nazis in prominent government and industry positions—best evidenced by Konrad Adenauer's appointment of several former Nazi officials to his cabinet in the spirit of "inclusion and reconciliation."³ Not until the highly publicized arrest and trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel, followed by the 1963 prosecution of seventeen Auschwitz guards in Frankfurt am Main did the crimes of the Nazi era reemerge as a topic of substantive national

¹ For studies on this topic in English, see Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics After Auschwitz* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006); Richard L. Merritt, *Democracy Imposed: U.S. Occupation Policy and the German public, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Jean Steinberg and Peter Sichrovsky, *Born Guilty: Children of Nazi Families* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). Dan Bar-On, *Legacy of Silence: Encounters with Children of the Third Reich*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

² Tilman Fichter and Siegwald Lönnendonker, *Kleine Geschichte des SDS: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund von Helmut Schmidt bis Rudi Dutschke*, 4th ed. (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2007), 109; Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. I, Chronik* (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 156.

³ Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2003), 24. See also Herf, *Divided memory*, 216–226.

debate, having even been left out of most school textbooks.⁴ Renewed concern over the persistence of authoritarian tendencies in the West German government spiked during the so-called *Spiegel* Affair of 1962, when Federal Defense Minister Franz Josef Strauß seized the offices of the left-leaning weekly magazine *Spiegel*, and jailed several of its editors and reporters. The extraordinary measures were in response to a story *Spiegel* broke in October 1962 about the West German military's embarrassing performance in a recent NATO training exercise, which suggested the Bundeswehr's limited ability to deal with the looming Soviet threat. The government's hard-fisted response to the story recalled the tactics of intimidation and curtailment of press freedom characteristic of the Nazi era.⁵

Historians and journalists have long credited the German New Left's penchant for attention-grabbing interventions with reviving critical public discussion of the legacy of fascism. The most famous of these was Beate Klarsfeld's "slap heard 'round the world."⁶ At the November 1968 party meeting of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the 29-year-old activist slapped Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger to call attention to his former membership in the Nazi Party. Klarsfeld's assault and subsequent imprisonment dramatized her generation's disgust for the literal continuity between West Germany and the Third Reich in terms of personnel and political structures. *Ungesühnte Nazijustiz* and Klarsfeld's slap are exemplary of what could be called *demonstrative antiauthoritarianism*, public actions that looked to raise awareness of persistent authoritarian tendencies within the structures and institutions of West German society. My choice of the term "demonstrative" comes from Jürgen Habermas, who in a speech to the SDS on June 2, 1968 praised New Left activists for developing "new demonstration techniques" that were "excellently suited" for "defeating publicity barriers" around issues ranging from the legacy of Nazism to the ongoing war in Vietnam. He credited the "demonstrative force" of such tactics with "politicizing the public sphere" of 1960s West Germany.⁷ Implicit in Habermas' celebration of "demonstrative force," however, was a trenchant critique of any form of action that looked to cross what he called the boundary between the "indirect power" of "symbolic action" and "immediate revolutionary struggle." Not only did Habermas describe the emphasis on immediacy in praxis as a "confusion of symbol and actuality," but he accused those who would perform such actions in West Germany of having

⁴ Peter Bürger, "Das Erbe Der Fünfziger Jahre," *Neue Rundschau*, 1984, 165–166. On the Eichmann trial, see Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2006); Christoph Classen, *Bilder der Vergangenheit: Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus im Fernsehen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999); Peter Krause, *Der Eichmann-Prozess in der deutschen Presse* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Campus, 2002); Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). On the Auschwitz trial, see Peter Reichel, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland* (Beck, 2001), 158–181.

⁵ On the Spiegel Affair, see Ronald Bunn, *German Politics and the Spiegel Affair: A Case Study of the Bonn System* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968); David Schoenbaum, *The Spiegel Affair* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968).

⁶ "Beate Klarsfeld—Dauntless Nazi Hunter," *Klarsfeld Foundation* (1987),

http://www.klarsfeldfoundation.org/press/87/beate_klarsfeld_dauntless/beate_klarsfeld_dauntless.htm.

⁷ Jürgen Habermas, "Die Scheinrevolution und ihre Kinder," in *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008), 189. Habermas first delivered these remarks to the SDS on June 2, 1968 in Frankfurt am Main. He published this as an essay in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* on June 5, 1968.

“lost contact with reality,” of being “narcissistic,” and of lapsing into “infantilism”—a critique I will return to in the conclusion to this chapter.⁸ Much has been made of activist interventions that called attention to West Germany’s objective continuity with the Third Reich. This chapter takes a different approach by examining forms of action that aimed at undoing the subjective persistence of authoritarianism, what I will call *performative antiauthoritarianism*.

Accompanying the disconcerting reappearance of evidence of the Third Reich’s living presence in West Germany was a controversial thesis proffered by West German scholars and activists in the 1960s. Fascism, they argued, did not disappear from the Federal Republic with the demise of the Third Reich. In addition to remaining embedded in the structures and personnel of West German institutions, it persisted in the very personality character of West Germans themselves. Chief among those who contributed to this thesis were the scholars, writers, and students associated with the socialist-leaning Argument Club in West Berlin. In 1963, Wolfgang Fritz Haug organized the Fascism Working Group with several of his students from the Free University Berlin (FU). They published their findings through the Argument Club’s journal *Das Argument* in a special series of special issues called “*Faschismus-Theorien*” (Theories of Fascism).⁹ Contrary to popular narratives that held affluence and liberal democracy as the cure for West Germany’s authoritarian tendencies, the Fascism Working Group located the potential for fascism in lingering subjective conditions for authoritarianism, particularly in child-rearing practices and an education system that produced individuals predisposed to sadomasochistic and unquestioningly obedient tendencies. To better understand the “societal continuity between fascism and the contemporary ‘*formierte Gesellschaft*’” championed by then-Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, Haug called for a retheorization of fascism that attended to both the material and the “psychological foundations” that made fascism possible as a social system.¹⁰ Central to the

⁸ Ibid., 197; 199; 198.

⁹ See *Das Argument* 30 (1964), *Das Argument* 32 (1965), and *Das Argument* 33 (1965). Founded in 1959 by Wolfgang Haug, then a junior philosophy faculty member at the FU, *Das Argument* quickly became one of the most popular journals of the German New Left. As an extension of *Das Argument*, Haug started the Argument-Club in 1965, a loosely connected group of activists, students, and faculty members in West Berlin who met once a week to discuss contemporary political and theoretical issues. See Siegwald Lönnendonker, Bernd Rabehl, and Jochen Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund Nach Der Trennung Von Der SPD*, vol. 1: 1960–67 (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 97–99. As one member, Rainer Langhans recalls, the Argument Club aimed at “connecting Marxism and Psychoanalysis to one another.” Rainer Langhans, *Ich bin’s: die ersten 68 Jahre* (München: Blumenbar, 2008), 31–32. To this day *Das Argument* remains one of the most influential critical theory journals in Germany and is still published today under the editorial supervision of Haug out of the FU’s Critical Theory Institute.

¹⁰ Wolfgang Fritz Haug, “Vorbemerkung,” *Das Argument* 32 7, no. 1, *Faschismus-Theorien* (1965): 31. See also Wolfgang Fritz Haug, “Ideologische Komponenten in Den Theorien Über Den Faschismus,” *Das Argument* 33 7, no. 2, *Faschismus Theorien* (May 1965): 1–6. Haug noted two glaring lacunae in West German scholarship on fascism. He argued that scholars have for the most part ignored the psychological and ideological foundations of fascism. When fascism was approached through a psychological lens, findings all but disregard the material conditions of the time. This divorcement of psychoanalytic and material conditions led Haug to posit the necessity for a new methodology for studying fascism: “Nazism displayed psychopathological abnormalities of such epochal historical force, that the task has become urgent to seek the foundation of this force within normality.” Like many others of the time, Haug was particularly concerned with the influence of the family on the development of authoritarian personality types and insisted that the turn to psychoanalysis and Marxism in critiques of fascism would reveal that there exists no separation of “fascism from bourgeois society” (30–31). In making the case for

working group's method and analytical concerns was the Frankfurt School's path-breaking studies of the social-psychological character of authoritarianism, best known today as the "authoritarian personality."

By the time the German New Left reached its peak of influence in 1968, hypotheses like this had become a cornerstone of activist praxis. In a 1968 essay tracing the development of the New Left up until that point, the student leader Rudi Dutschke averred, "Today's fascism is no longer manifested in a party or in a person, it lies in the daily molding and education of people. In short, it lies in the existing systems of institutions."¹¹ As discussed in Chapter One, activists in early 1960s West Germany prized the experience of participating in direct political action as a way to undo the psychic character of domination on which consumer capitalism depended. In the second half of the 1960s, this belief in the transformative power of direct action was inflected by concern for the legacy of fascism and nascent interest in decolonization figures like Frantz Fanon and Che Guevara who extolled the psychically liberating potential of militant action. In what follows, I take performative antiauthoritarianism to describe a structure of feeling shared by New Left activists who held the performance of disobedient (and often illegal) forms of direct action to be useful not only for targeting structures of authority, but for transforming the very authoritarian personalities they believed themselves to have internalized as a result of growing up in Nazi and postwar Germany.

The distinction I draw between demonstrative and performative antiauthoritarianism is admittedly artificial—intended more as method of analysis than a principle for categorizing New Left activist practices. It does not suggest that Klarsfeld's slap entailed no transformative psychic effect for either her or Kiesinger. Nor can it be said that the interventions I describe here under the label of performative antiauthoritarianism lacked demonstrative force. By taking performative antiauthoritarianism to describe a structure of feeling, I examine interventions that were prized by those doing the performing for having a potentially transformative effect on their subjectivity. Interventions like Klarsfeld's slap and *Ungesühnte Nazijustiz* were engineered primarily to publicly demonstrate to an audience the literal personnel continuity between West Germany and its fascist past. The authoritarian character structure targeted by the actions discussed in this chapter was not necessarily tethered to the historical formation of Nazism. In a discussion paper presented to the SDS in September 1967, Rudi Dutschke and Hans-Jürgen Krahl articulated just this. Speaking in the wake of the 1966 recession that signaled the end of the postwar *Wirtschaftswunder*, the two leading antiauthoritarian theorists dismissed social democratic calls for state reform of the economy as an attempt by capital to adapt to "transformed conditions." Invoking the work of Max Horkheimer and Friedrich Pollock, they claimed state intervention to prevent large-scale financial crisis would pave the way for "integral

attending to both the psychic and material conditions for fascism, *Das Argument* drew greatly on the earlier work of scholars associated with the Frankfurt School, for whom the study of the "authoritarian personality" had been a central project since the early 1930s.

¹¹ Rudi Dutschke, "Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus," in *Rebellion Der Studenten Oder Die Neue Opposition*, ed. Uwe Bergmann et al. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), 68.

statism,” the “consummation of monopoly capitalism.”¹² According to Dutschke and Krahl, this would only intensify the “internalization of economic violence” in individuals.¹³ To escape the world financial crisis of 1929, the capitalist order in Germany had resorted to the “terroristic power structure of fascism.” In the postwar era, “extra-economic violent-coercion” was not eliminated but “psychically transformed.”¹⁴ This influential social analysis allowed West German antiauthoritarians to sketch out connections between the violent forms of manipulation used by the Nazis and the more subtle psychic character of domination in the performance principle of late capitalism, which itself depended on the immiseration of the Third World. They labeled this continuity authoritarianism, which they claimed was a fundamental dimension of capitalism. Although Dutschke and Krahl’s fears of “integral statism” overlooked signs of the already emergent system of deterritorialized finance capitalism that would soon succeed monopoly capitalism, the transhistorical dynamic they attributed to authoritarianism nonetheless illustrated the similarities they found in the social domination of the Third Reich and Federal Republic.

The fact that activists turned to direct action as a way of transforming their own modes of thinking and being certainly raises messy questions of agency specifically as they relate to embodiment and intentionality in performance. But rather than bracket out such questions for the sake of analytical tidiness, my analysis interrogates what such inconsistencies, fallacies, and potential contradictions might reveal about performative antiauthoritarianism—which again, I take to be a structure of feeling and not a precise explanation of activist practices. Moreover, I examine how prioritizing direct action as a form of self-fashioning troubled traditional theories of political intervention, especially the relationship between objective and subjective conditions of struggle. The antiauthoritarian view of subjectivity as an objective terrain of intervention drew fierce accusations of voluntarism and left fascism from mentors like Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas. It also motivated the invention of new forms of engagement that were translated to the West German context from other national contexts not to mention the world of art. Just as I am interested in examining how the legacy of Nazism and postwar reconstruction conditioned performative antiauthoritarianism, so too do I examine the legacy of this antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. But instead of repeating well-rehearsed descriptions of antiauthoritarianism as, to again reference Habermas, “subjective insolence,” I weigh in on the more complicated consequence of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling today.¹⁵ Thus, after examining the

¹² Rudi Dutschke and Hans-Jürgen Krahl, “Das Sich-Verweigern erfordert Guerilla-Mentalität,” in *Geschichte ist machbar*, ed. Jürgen Miermeister (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1980), 91. The actual title of this document is “Organisationsreferat.” For more on the history of the document, see Wolfgang Kraushaar, “Autoritärer Staat und Antiautoritäre Bewegung: Zum Organisationsreferat von Rudi Dutschke und Hans-Jürgen Krahl auf der 22. Delegiertenkonferenz des SDS in Frankfurt (4.-8. Sept. 1967),” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 3, Aufsätze und Register*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998).

¹³ Dutschke and Krahl, “Das Sich-Verweigern erfordert Guerilla-Mentalität,” 90.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, “Meine Damen und Herren, ich hoffe, daß Herr Dutschke noch hier ist...,” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 2, Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 254.

emergence and ascendance of performative antiauthoritarianism in the 1960s, this chapter concludes by considering the question: how might the antiauthoritarian personality have conditioned, or at least anticipated the emergence of what Brian Holmes has called the “flexible personality,” the psychic habitus of finance capitalism?¹⁶

The Antiauthoritarian Personality

The studies of authoritarianism produced by the *Institut für Sozialforschung* provided much of the theoretical underpinnings for the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, albeit much to the chagrin of the Frankfurt School’s surviving members in late 1960s West Germany. As early as 1929, the *Institut für Sozialforschung* had launched its first social-psychological study of the authoritarian character structures of German workers and salaried employees, which was soon followed by more substantive historical and theoretical reflections conducted by Max Horkheimer and Erich Fromm.¹⁷

The most notable of these studies would be Theodor Adorno’s contribution to *The Authoritarian Personality*, completed while in US exile during the 1940s.¹⁸ First published in 1950, *The Authoritarian Personality* was a multi-volume research collaboration between the *Institut für Sozialforschung* and the Berkeley Public Opinion Study Group, a group of UC Berkeley social psychologists. The aim of the five-year project was not to prove the existence of authoritarianism but to explore, as Max Horkheimer put it in his preface to massive work, “the rise of an ‘anthropological’ species we call the authoritarian type of man.”¹⁹ As the program’s co-director, Adorno contributed a qualitative analysis of hundreds of interviews conducted with American workers. His conclusions resonated with the earlier description he offered in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* of anti-Semitism as a materially grounded sadomasochistic tendency with roots in “the concealment of domination in production.”²⁰ For Adorno, the psychological characteristics of the authoritarian personality included conformism, a willingness to submit to authority, false projection, sexual repression, lack of critical thought, and aggressive domination.

¹⁶ Brian Holmes, “The Flexible Personality: For a New Cultural Critique,” *Transform* (2002), <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/holmes/en>.

¹⁷ Led by Max Horkheimer and Erich Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Psychological and Sociological Study* revealed authoritarian proclivities among even avowed leftist workers. Erich Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Psychological and Sociological Study*, trans. Wolfgang Bonss (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). The conclusions of the study together with other emerging conditions led Horkheimer in 1931 to begin preparations for the Institute’s exile from Germany. See John Abromeit, “The Limits of Praxis: The Social-Psychological Foundations of Theodor Adorno’s and Herbert Marcuse’s Interpretations of the 1960s Protest Movements,” in *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the US in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 30.

¹⁸ For background on *The Authoritarian Personality* including the conditions of its production and collaboration, see Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995), 408–430; Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality: Studies in Prejudice* (New York: Harper, 1950), ix.

²⁰ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 173.

Despite developing a novel quantitative method for studying these psychological characteristics, Adorno refused to shy away from the material conditions that made possible the authoritarian personality. He did not posit the authoritarian personality as a strictly psychological condition, but insisted that its development into a full-blown fascist system depended “primarily upon the situation of the most powerful economic interests, upon whether they, by conscious design or not, make use of this device for maintaining their dominant status.”²¹ By building on the insights of Fromm and Wilhelm Reich, Adorno emphasized the crucial role the family played in instilling the authoritarian personality in children. But he also stressed that an authoritarian family produces authoritarian children less because of what it *does to them* than what it *does not provide them*, namely shelter from the disciplining forces of socialization under monopoly capitalism.²² Instead of attributing responsibility to the family, Adorno located the condition of possibility for authoritarianism in society itself, particularly “the ‘reification’ of a social reality which is determined by property relations in which the human beings themselves are, as it were, mere appendages.”²³ That capitalism and fascism could share the same social reality proved to Adorno the existence of authoritarian tendencies within ostensibly liberal societies.

He drew his conclusions in conversation with several interlocutors, chief among them Max Horkheimer, whose essay “The Authoritarian State” was widely read among the German New Left. Originally written in 1940 for a mimeographed memorial volume for Walter Benjamin, Horkheimer withheld publication of “The Authoritarian State” until the 1950s, deeming his thesis too controversial.²⁴ He argued that an authoritarian model of social organization is not reserved for fascist states. The type of social domination presumed to be characteristic of fascism, he argued, also defined socialist and capitalist societies albeit in more subtle and less openly terroristic forms. Horkheimer took as his point of departure Friedrich Pollock’s argument that state capitalism succeeds the liberal phase of capitalism. Pollock’s thesis, in part, responded to the changed configuration of capitalism following the global economic collapse of 1929 and its resolution through centralized state planning. Within state capitalism, Pollock insisted, the functions of the market, primarily the regulation of production and consumption, come under the control of the state in a planned economy. He saw this evidenced in the industrial cartels of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union’s five-year plans, and the New Deal under Roosevelt. Although this allows for and demands increased “rationalization [...] for all public activities,” the subsumption of the economy into the political sphere, so Pollock argued, paves the way for new and intensified forms of domination.²⁵

While Pollock located emancipatory possibilities within the potential demise of monopoly capitalism, Horkheimer instead elaborated on the repressive features of state capitalism,

²¹ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality: Studies in Prejudice*, 158.

²² Martin Jay offers a similar reading in *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, 247.

²³ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality: Studies in Prejudice*, 348.

²⁴ Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, 281.

²⁵ Friedrich Pollock, “State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations,” in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1982), 77.

declaring unequivocally: “State capitalism is the authoritarian state of the present.”²⁶ While state capitalism described German fascism, Horkheimer asserted that it was most fully embodied by the Soviet Union. “Integral statism or state socialism,” he wrote, “is the most consistent form of the authoritarian state” due to its emancipation from private capital.²⁷ Against liberal proponents who located a natural tendency towards emancipation in social market economies autonomous from the state—of the sort Ludwig Erhard championed for West Germany beginning in 1948—Horkheimer argued that the proclivity to develop into state capitalism was inherent to the “liberal phase” of capitalism.²⁸ The economic antagonisms and crisis tendencies of liberal capitalism gave rise to the drive to subsume objective contradictions to deliberate political control, which itself necessitated expanded bureaucracy and administration. Unlike Pollock who saw in the state’s assumption of the means of production the opportunity for a worker’s movement to seize the production apparatus by taking over the state, Horkheimer noted how the elimination of financial crisis and the guarantee of material subsistence would also eliminate the chief objective conditions for rebellion in the first place.²⁹

Horkheimer’s conviction of the state’s incompatibility with freedom led him to promote a revolutionary praxis based on a need for the masses to spontaneously capture the forces of production while bypassing the state. Throughout the essay, Horkheimer affirmed the power of “conscious will,” claiming “the conditions for the realization of utopia are so urgently ripe that they can no longer be honestly articulated.” Only repression of “human will,” he argued, stood in the way.³⁰ In fact, “for the revolutionary,” Habermas went so far to declare, “conditions have always been ripe.”³¹ Horkheimer’s embrace of the subjective conditions of revolutionary praxis within an “integrated state” for transforming objective structures found an attentive audience among the German New Left, who also embraced Adorno’s complementary emphasis on the subject for undermining the authoritarian personality.

Upon returning to West Germany from exile in the United States, Adorno did not shy away from noting the continued potential for fascism’s return to the Federal Republic. In a keynote address delivered on November 6, 1959, he provocatively argued that “fascism lives on” in West Germany “due to the fact that the objective conditions of society that engendered fascism continue to exist.”³² For Adorno, these conditions included, above all, a risk-laden economic system upon which most people relied, but which was “beyond their control.”³³ Despite the prosperity that accompanied the emergence of liberal democracy in the immediate postwar era, West Germans, so Adorno reasoned, ultimately lacked strong connections to democracy, since it

²⁶ Max Horkheimer, “The Authoritarian State,” in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato, Eike Gebhardt, and Elliot Eisenberg (New York: Continuum, 1982), 97.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

³² Theodor W. Adorno, “The Meaning of Working through the Past,” in *Can One Live after Auschwitz?: A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 13.

³³ *Ibid.*

was a system instituted by an outside power. “[D]emocracy,” he wrote, “has not become naturalized to the point where people truly experience it as their own and see themselves as subjects of the political process.”³⁴ In short, Adorno claimed that West Germans saw themselves as “objects, not subjects of society.”³⁵

Although Adorno located the seeds for fascism and the authoritarian personality in “powerful economic and social forces,”³⁶ he did not see any possibility for resisting these objective conditions. Instead, he and the other authors of *The Authoritarian Personality* emphasized the need for education programs that promoted tolerance. The possibility of eliminating the authoritarian personality rested in targeting the psyche of individuals, a position Adorno maintained throughout the 1950s and 1960s.³⁷ The specter of authoritarianism even shaped Adorno’s philosophical thought. In *Negative Dialectics*, his masterwork published in 1966, Adorno declared that the experience of Hitler “imposed a new categorical imperative upon humanity in the state of their unfreedom: to arrange their thinking and conduct, so that Auschwitz never repeats itself, so that nothing similar ever happens again.”³⁸

To transform social reality, however, required something other than targeting the West Germany’s fragile and imperfect democratic structures since Adorno feared what might replace them. Instead of revolution, he insisted on the need for reeducation. “Since the possibility of changing the objective—namely societal and political—conditions is extremely limited today,” Adorno declared as late as 1966, “attempts to work against the repetition of Auschwitz are necessarily restricted to the subjective dimension.”³⁹ In his earlier address from 1959, Adorno described this strategy as a “turn toward the subject,” a form of enlightenment he believed could reinforce critical self-consciousness.⁴⁰ To this end, Adorno asserted the need for West Germany to develop educational programs based on a “democratic pedagogy” that would mitigate the psychic predisposition to coldness and organized brutality.⁴¹ His emphasis on the subject as the possibility for resistance was hardly an exception for Adorno whose larger oeuvre stresses the need for individual refuge against existing society, be it through autonomous art, critical thought, or, in this case, education.

When taken together with his well-known suspicions of direct political action, Adorno’s insistence on the capacity of an autonomous subject “to resist the violent collective of the authoritarian state” has led many scholars to oppose Adorno’s political ideas to the forms of

³⁴ Ibid., 7.

³⁵ Ibid., 11.

³⁶ Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality: Studies in Prejudice*, 342.

³⁷ See his essay from 1966, Theodor W. Adorno, “Education after Auschwitz,” in *Can One Live after Auschwitz?: A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 19–36.

³⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Dennis Redmond, 2001, 358, <http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/ndtrans.html>.

³⁹ Adorno, “Education after Auschwitz,” 20.

⁴⁰ Adorno, “The Meaning of Working through the Past,” 17.

⁴¹ Ibid., 14.

political engagement pursued by the German New Left.⁴² Russell Bermann, for example, presents Adorno and the German New Left as entirely antithetical to one another. Adorno's position "that change in objective structures is less feasible than in the subjective realm of education and psychology," Bermann argues:

would run foul of a movement increasingly oriented toward immediate political action in the realm of bonafide policy. The two sides addressed different levels of politics: while Adorno's education after Auschwitz aspired to changing individuals to become less prone to brutality, the student movement's goals included toppling the Shah or stopping the war in Vietnam.⁴³

Antiauthoritarian activists certainly differed from Adorno in their willingness to target "objective social forces," but Bermann's argument implies that Adorno's emphasis on the subjective possibilities of resistance did not influence the German New Left.⁴⁴ This leads him to draw a strict opposition between Adorno and the German New Left, as well as "objective" and "subjective" approaches to political action. In doing so, he ignores the antiauthoritarian sentiment that shared Adorno's belief in the need to work "subjectively against the objective potential for disaster."⁴⁵

Bermann is, of course, in good company affirming such a position since it resonates so closely with Adorno's own assessment of West German students. But the priorities of Adorno and the German New Left were not as distinct as is so often assumed. Intellectual and social historians like John Abromeit remind us that both parties were concerned about similar issues like university reform, press manipulation, and the Emergency Laws. Still underemphasized, however, is their shared emphasis on the subject and psyche as an object of political transformation. By 1967, attention to the psychological transformations necessary for social change had become widespread in the German New Left. In a May 1967 article defending a sit-in protest at the FU, Rudi Dutschke urged readers to "enlarge our antiauthoritarian 'camp'" for the purposes of transforming not only West German universities and society, but individuals themselves. "[T]he development of antiauthoritarian character structures," he argued, "is certainly a value in itself, an elementary important step on the path to human emancipation."⁴⁶ Even the New Left's mode of organization resonated with Adorno's position. Despite his wariness of collectives that might compromise the capacity for critical self-reflection, Adorno envisioned the education projects he recommended to be undertaken by already "self-conscious" and open-minded "cadres [...] whose influence in the most widely varied circles would then reach the whole of society."⁴⁷ I do not mean to conflate Adorno's politics with the German New Left, nor am I necessarily suggesting that Adorno's critique of the German New Left was hypocritical. There did exist crucial political and intellectual divergences between Adorno and

⁴² Russell Berman, "Adorno's Politics," in *Adorno: A Critical Reader*, ed. Andrew Rubin and Nigel C Gibson (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 123.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 126–127.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴⁵ Adorno, "The Meaning of Working through the Past," 16.

⁴⁶ Rudi Dutschke, "Demokratie, Universität und Gesellschaft," in *Geschichte ist machbar*, ed. Jürgen Miermeister (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1980), 74.

⁴⁷ Adorno, "The Meaning of Working through the Past," 16.

the German New Left. Nonetheless, attending to how antiauthoritarian activists applied a logic similar to Adorno's might help us to immanently explore the roots of antiauthoritarian thought and praxis. As I argue in this chapter's conclusion, such attention can historicize the critiques leveled at the German New Left by their intellectual forebears like Adorno, opening up new vantage points from which to interrogate the legacy of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling.

Antiauthoritarian Organization

Late in the evening of February 3, 1966 a group calling itself the International Liberation Front covered walls throughout West Berlin with posters that declared:

[Chancellor] Erhard and the Bonn Party support

MURDER.

Murder through napalm bombs!

Murder through poison gas!

Murder through atomic bombs? [...]

The East and West are increasingly arranging to make profits off under-developed countries. Now the oppressed are gripping their guns. For them the future means:

REVOLUTION. How long will we let murder be committed in our name. AMERICANS OUT OF VIETNAM!⁴⁸

While posting the fliers, five people were arrested for defacing public property and attempting to incite a riot. Most of those who took part belonged to the SDS and the Argument Club, but the intervention had been organized in clandestine fashion by a circle of activists around Rudi Dutschke and Bernd Rabehl without permission from either of these groups.⁴⁹ Although authorities immediately removed the posters, newspapers nationwide reported on the action on February 5—the same day as a scheduled anti-Vietnam war rally in West Berlin sponsored by a coalition of student groups, including the SDS. News of the poster action helped mobilize some 2,500 students for the demonstration. During the march, protestors blocked traffic on West Berlin's main boulevard for over twenty minutes before one hundred activists staged the first sit-down strike in West German history outside the nearby Amerika-Haus. Like the Tshombe demonstration a year earlier, the protest quickly escalated when one activist tried ripping down the building's American flag and several others hurled eggs at the building.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ See "Amis raus aus Vietnam" (translation Martin Klimke), reprinted in Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2011), 51. An original copy can be found in APO-A. A small group led by Dieter Kunzelmann also posted copies of the fliers in Munich. See Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:226–227.

⁴⁹ Dutschke had played a significant role in the poster action. Members of two reading groups he and Rabehl led, one affiliated with the SDS and the other with the Argument Club, had been the main participants in the action. For a thorough account of the *Plakataktion*, as it came to be called, see Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:226–228.

⁵⁰ For more details including the names of those who took part in the demonstration, see *Ibid.*, 1: 1960:–67:231–233; Siegward Lönnendonker and Tilman Fichter, *Freie Universität Berlin, 1948- 1973: Hochschule Im Umbruch*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Pressestelle d. FU Berlin, 1973), 66; Ulrich Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1983), 119–120. For an account in English, see Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 49.

Writing in late 1966, the journalist Kai Hermann presciently described the public outrage over the protest as beginning a “civil war” against leftist students in West Berlin.⁵¹ The conservative press ran stories deriding the action as a shameful display of disrespect toward West Germany’s most important ally. Some even suggested that the East German government had paid those who took part. Three days later, the West Berlin CDU organized a six hundred-person counterdemonstration against what they described as the “anti-American riots of some left-oriented students.” It featured speeches and chants demanding “Bums out!” and “*Geht doch nach drüben*” (Go over the wall, why don’t you).⁵² The Berlin Senate clamped down on student protests within the city, placing extreme restrictions on all demonstrations, which, by the year’s end, many activists made it a special point to break.

The clandestine poster action and the events of February 5 also angered activists within the SDS.⁵³ As SDS chair Helmut Schauer explained during a public debate over the events, the illegal character of the actions did not concern him so much as the conditions in which they were performed. In his estimation, the struggle in West Germany had not reached a point where illegality was either necessary or effective.⁵⁴ In 1965, the SDS, with its two thousand members nationally, still followed a *Realpolitik* approach that emphasized strategic alliances with social democratic and liberal student organizations. The organization looked down upon provocative forms of direct action and civil disobedience. When it came to political action, mobilizing and enlightening a mass constituency took precedence. These priorities owed much to the SDS’ former alliance with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), who had expelled the student group from its ranks just four years earlier. Founded in the late 1940s as the SPD’s youth wing, the SDS was largely a training ground for future SPD officials throughout the 1940s and 1950s.⁵⁵ The split between the groups was sparked by the SPD’s adoption of the Bad Godesberg protocol which transformed the SPD from a class-oriented party to a popular party. Disagreements between the SDS and SPD came to a head in 1961 when the party leadership officially made

⁵¹ Kai Hermann, “Die „Rote Garde“ Von Berlin: Zwanzig Marxistische Studenten Lassen Die Stadt Erbeben,” *Die Zeit*, December 30, 1966.

⁵² Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:232; Gerhard Baus, *Die Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und Westberlin* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977), 174. For a news report on the counter demonstration, see “Sympathie-Kundgebung Vor Dem Amerika-Haus,” *Die Welt*, February 9, 1966.

⁵³ Former members of the SDS, chief among them Wolfgang Fritz Haug and other members of the Argument Club described the actions as “unpolitical actionism” and called for the expulsion of those who took part. Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:228. See also Gretchen Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke: Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben* (Munich: Droemer Knaur, 1998), 87.. Wolfgang Kraushaar has called the poster a double provocation, aimed at both the West German government and the more moderate activists in the SDS. Wolfgang Kraushaar, “Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus,” in *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus 1.*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Hamburger Ed., 2006), 756.

⁵⁴ These remarks were delivered during an SDS meeting on February 9, 1966 and are summarized in Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:233–234. The primary effect of the action, others argued, was to make a small grouping seem more powerful than it actually was. An example of such a critique was issued to the SDS leadership in the form of annotations made to a copy of the poster by an anonymous contributor. See *Ibid.*, 1: 1960:–67:231.

⁵⁵ For the definitive study of the SDS, see Willy Albrecht, *Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS): Vom parteikonformen Studentenverband zum Repräsentanten der neuen Linken* (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1994).

membership in the SDS mutually exclusive with membership in the SPD.⁵⁶ Despite the split, however, SDS leaders like Schauer continued championing the democratization of West Germany through legal and constitutional means, even at the expense of socialist principles.

With much of the rest of Subversive Aktion in West Berlin and Munich, Dutschke, Rabehl, and Dieter Kunzelmann had entered the SDS in January 1965.⁵⁷ Their membership exacerbated debates already brewing within the organization. News from the United States about the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley had sparked interest in direct action and forms of organization that did not derive from worker struggles.⁵⁸ Subversive Aktion challenged the SDS's Old Left alliances with East Germany and labor unions. They championed instead practical "international solidarity" with Third World liberation movements, who they believed to have replaced workers as the world historical revolutionary subject.⁵⁹ This position owed much to the recent work of Herbert Marcuse, particularly his immensely influential book *One-Dimensional Man* (1964).⁶⁰ In this work, Marcuse attempted to account for the stabilization of capitalism in the 1950s and the near total integration of the working class into a smoothly running system of domination. Marcuse asserted the inadequacy of Marx's theory of the proletarianization and radicalization of the industrial working class with contemporary conditions. He argued that marginalized communities like minorities, women, or colonial subjects had become the bearers of critical consciousness. Their exclusion from the benefits of affluent society, according to Marcuse, left them more easily able to comprehend the exploitative dynamics that undergirded contemporary capitalism. Dutschke and other antiauthoritarians seized on Marcuse's analysis, which decentered workers as the privileged agent of social change. Whereas Marcuse placed hope squarely on non-integrated outsiders located primarily in the Third World, West German activists like Dutschke privileged a corollary argument. He believed that access to critical knowledge afforded students and intellectuals a crucial role to play in preparing conditions for revolutionary transformation in the metropolises.⁶¹ According to Subversive Aktion, to move past traditional and outmoded Left politics demanded not only new theories, but also new forms of organization and intervention.⁶²

⁵⁶ The reasons for the split were numerous, but the leading issue was the SDS' insistence on formally recognizing the East German state. In its press release announcing the split, the SPD claimed the SDS was working to undermine the party. Fichter and Lönnendonker, *Kleine Geschichte des SDS*, 111–114.

⁵⁷ See Chapter One of this dissertation.

⁵⁸ For a thorough discussion of the exchanges between the US and West German New Left, see Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 40–49. On the history of the New Left internationally Carole Fink, Phillip Gassert, and Detlef Junker, eds., *1968: the world transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston, Mass.: South End Press, 1987); Klimke, *The Other Alliance*; Jeremi Suri, *The Global Revolutions of 1968* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007).

⁵⁹ "Theses on the Situation of the SDS," in Frank Böckelmann and Herbert Nagel, eds., *Subversive Aktion: der Sinn der Organisation ist ihr Scheitern* (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 2002), 273.

⁶⁰ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991). Although *One-Dimensional Man* would not be translated into German for another year, Dutschke had purchased an English copy while on a trip to the US for the funeral of his American mother-in-law. Dutschke, *Rudi Dutschke*, 34.

⁶¹ During a lecture at the Free University in the summer of 1967, Marcuse contested what ultimately became the self-positioning of middle-class students in West Germany as revolutionary subjects, but he never dismissed the role students could play in bringing about the conditions necessary for revolution. Herbert Marcuse, "The Problem of

By late 1965, a clear split had emerged within the SDS nationally. More traditional members, located primarily in Frankfurt am Main and Marburg opposed the ideas becoming popular in Berlin and Munich. Schauer himself published an article in the SDS journal *Neue Kritik* in October 1965 describing the “actionist concepts” propagated by Dutschke and Kunzelmann as shortsighted, elitist, and manipulative.⁶³ Other “traditionalists,” as they came to be known, followed suit, maligning their rivals as “sectarian” and accusing them of “verbal radicalism.”⁶⁴ The traditionalists remained committed to mass organizing, although their antiauthoritarian critics contended that “mass” for them only meant the “working masses.”⁶⁵ Over the course of 1965, the so-called antiauthoritarians found increasing support within the SDS, exemplified by Dutschke’s selection to the political advisory board of the West Berlin SDS in February 1965, just a month after joining the organization. At the national convention in October 1965, he was elected to the national leadership.⁶⁶

The Vietnam poster and Amerika-Haus action caused tensions between the traditionalists and antiauthoritarians to boil over. On February 13, 1966, the SDS leadership called on Dutschke to defend the poster action at an emergency national assembly. In his remarks, Dutschke offered one of the first sustained, public articulations of antiauthoritarian praxis.⁶⁷ In addition to stressing the need to shift solidarity from the working class within industrial societies to the oppressed peoples of the Third World, he proclaimed the need for forms of organization better suited to forging connections with Third World struggles and weakening colonizing powers from within their own metropolises. He stressed the need to spread revolutionary consciousness and “perform resistance against repression.”⁶⁸ Such work, Dutschke claimed, could only be done through a “temporary” avant-gardist approach that would feature increasingly radicalized actions performed by small groups like those who had taken part in the Vietnam action. Dutschke

Violence and the Radical Opposition,” in *The New Left and the 1960s: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, ed. Douglas Kellner and Jeremy Shapiro, trans. Shiery M. Weber (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 57–75.

⁶² See “Die Rolle der antikapitalistischen, wenn auch nicht sozialistischen Sowjetunion für die Marxistischen Sozialisten in der Welt,” in Böckelmann and Nagel, *Subversive Aktion*.

⁶³ Helmut Schauer, “Zur Politik Des SDS, Auszüge Aus Dem Rechenschaftsbericht Des 1. Vorsitzenden,” *Neue Kritik* 32 (October 1965): 6.

⁶⁴ Peter Lauden, “‘Traditionalisten’ Und ‘Anti-autoritäre,’” *Neue Kritik*, no. 46 (February 1968): 71–76. On the divide between the traditionalists and antiauthoritarians, see Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 52–60; Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 94–99.

⁶⁵ Lauden, “‘Traditionalisten’ Und ‘Anti-autoritäre,’” 72.

⁶⁶ Such developments were met with hostility from Schauer who argued that the increasingly popular “actionist concepts” propagated by Dutschke and Kunzelmann were shortsighted as a political strategy at best, but more likely authoritarian, elitist, and manipulative. Schauer, “Zur Politik Des SDS, Auszüge Aus Dem Rechenschaftsbericht Des 1. Vorsitzenden.”

⁶⁷ No transcript of Dutschke’s speech exists. What follows draws from his notes which have been reproduced in Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:234–236.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 1960:–67:236.

posited the turn to an entirely new organizational model that adapted Che Guevara's notion of the "foco" to West Germany.⁶⁹

Guevara's theory favored small and loosely knit groups, but broke with earlier vanguardist traditions. In stark contrast to the rigid and hierarchical organization of a mass party, the foco was defined by flexibility, spontaneity, and adaptation to local circumstances. Guevara's theory of the foco held that the actions of a small vanguard could, like the focal point of a magnifying glass, ignite mass revolutionary action by compelling others to follow suit. He attributed great importance to the will of revolutionaries to develop the subjective conditions necessary for revolution in places where none yet existed. Although Guevara's theory focused on fomenting uprisings in the countryside, his New Left readers like Dutschke and Régis Debray looked to translate the foco to the city.⁷⁰ In his remarks to the SDS on February 13, Dutschke explained the need to build "small, homogenous guerilla units" at universities whose task it would be to radicalize other groups through provocative actions. Later, Dutschke described the poster action as an early experiment with the foco:

For the first time an attempt is being made to apply the foco theory by Che Guevara to political practice. The question is: How and under what conditions can the subjective factor enter itself into the historical process as an objective factor? Guevara's answer for Latin America was that the revolutionaries do not always have to wait for the objective conditions for the revolution. Rather they can, through the foco, through the armed avant-garde of the people create the objective conditions for revolution through their subjective action. In its last consequence, this question also stood behind the poster action, and continues to stand behind every action today.⁷¹

Both the forms of action and the highly decentralized approach to organization Dutschke championed broke with the more traditional party model on which the SDS was based. These differences were not simply questions of organization, but represented strong ideological and strategic divergences.⁷²

⁶⁹ Dutschke and others had become familiar with Guevara's ideas by reading copies of *On Guerilla Warfare* (1960) smuggled from the GDR, as well as the work of the French student Régis Debray on Guevara. See Jennifer Ruth Hosek, "'Subaltern Nationalism' and the West Berlin Anti-Authoritarians," *German Politics and Society* 26, no. 86 (Spring 2008): 64. For discussions of the impact of Guevara's thought on Dutschke see Ingo Juchler, *Rebellische Subjektivität und Internationalismus: Der Einfluss Herbert Marcuses und der nationalen Befreiungsbewegungen in der sog. Dritten Welt auf die Studentenbewegung in der BRD* (Marburg: Verlag Arbeiterbewegung und Gesellschaftswissenschaft, 1989); Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Rudi Dutschke und die bewaffnete Kampf," in *Rudi Dutschke, Andreas Baader und die RAF*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar, Karin Wieland, and Jan. Philipp Reemtsma (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), 13–50.

⁷⁰ Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?*, trans. Bobbye Ortiz (New York: Grove Press, 1967). In 1965, Debray was studying at the École Normale Supérieure under Louis Althusser and became increasingly involved with revolutionary movements in Latin America. His most recent writing in 1965, "Castroism: Latin America's Long March" leveled a devastating critique of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, that advocated the internationalization of guerrilla struggle not just in Latin America, Asia, and Africa but also in the West, a discussion he would develop in *Revolution in the Revolution?*

⁷¹ Rudi Dutschke, "Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus," in *Rebellion Der Studenten Oder Die Neue Opposition*, ed. Uwe Bergmann et al. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), 69.

⁷² The term antiauthoritarian has genealogical roots in the history of radical leftist thought, first emerging as the name to describe the camp around the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin in the First International, who engaged in a

When Dutschke issued his defense of the poster action, he and others were already experimenting with the organizational model of the *foco*. Together with several members of the SDS and foreign students from Africa and Latin America involved in the International Working Group, Dutschke and Rabehl started a new group, called Viva Maria! In 1965. The small activist collective looked to build solidarity with emergent struggles in the Third World while synthesizing the analytical sophistication of Marxism with an emphasis on direct action drawn from the anarchist tradition. Their organizational aims were entailed in the group's very *nom de plume*, which alluded to title of Louis Malle's 1965 film *Viva Maria!*.⁷³ Starring Brigitte Bardot and Jeanne Moreau, the comedy follows two actresses named Maria, one an Irish anarchist (Bardot) and the other her French Marxist foil (Moreau) as they tour Latin America with a traveling circus. Interactions with local populations radicalize both characters, leading them to join a revolutionary uprising in Mexico. Rabehl later noted that the film's appeal rested in its promise that "[Marxist Theory] would make fruitful anarchism's subjective factor, will to revolt, spontaneity, imagination, and passion."⁷⁴ "That is what Rudi Dutschke for a year and a half had struggled to set forth within Subversive Aktion," Dieter Kunzelmann recalled, "namely to take seriously the world totality and not only the analysis of the highly industrialized societies on the sides of the Frankfurt School, psychoanalysis etc." Kunzelmann continued, "The film was confirmation for us that we have to use all of our means and possibilities to support the Third World from the metropolises."⁷⁵ The very name Viva Maria! encapsulated a balance between theory and praxis, objective considerations and revolutionary will, not to mention solidarity between First and Third World activists.

Each week the dozen or so members of Viva Maria! met to plan actions and discuss theoretical texts. Exemplary of their actions was a collaboration with a group of foreign students in West Berlin to disrupt the West Berlin premier of the film *Africa Addio*. Directed by Gualtiero Jacopetti, *Africa Addio* was marketed as a documentary of the violent political events that transpired in the Congo in 1964. As a flier circulated by the African Student League and the SDS asserted, however, the film's crude juxtaposition of real footage of mob violence with scenes of

virulent debate with Marx, Engels and the rest of the General Council following the Paris Commune. Without moving too far from the present argument, it should suffice to say that the differences that emerged in these debates were not only ideological, but also organizational. Against the disciplined, structured, and hierarchical approach advocated by the General Council, the antiauthoritarians advocated social revolution based primarily on spontaneous and dispersed direct actions, leading Engels to famously proclaim the impossibility of organization without authority. While the antiauthoritarians of the German New Left did not self-identify as anarchists, their methods and modes of intervention were distinct from the tradition of labor organizing that had been handed down through the International and various communist and socialist parties. See Frederick Engels, "On Authority," Marxists Internet Archive, trans. Robert C. Tucker, 1872, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1872/10/authority.htm>; Robert Graham, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005), 93–100.

⁷³ According to Ulrich Enzensberger, Dutschke saw the film with Rabehl, Kunzelmann, and several future members of Kommune 1 including Hans-Joachim Hameister, Dorothea Ridder and himself. Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I* (München: Goldmann, 2006), 60.

⁷⁴ Bernd Rabehl, "Die Provokationselite," in *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund Nach Der Trennung Von Der SPD*, ed. Siegwald Lönnendonker, Bernd Rabehl, and Jochen Staadt, vol. 1: 1960–67 (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 425.

⁷⁵ Wolfgang Dreßen and Eckhard Siepmann, eds., "Interview mit Dieter Kunzelmann," in *Nilpferd des höllischen Urwalds: Situationisten, Gruppe SPUR, Kommune I* (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1991), 194.

animal sacrifice suggested that “the people of the African continent lack the ability to build civilization.”⁷⁶ Among the many scenes that elicited particular outrage among West Germans was the graphic execution of a black prisoner by the notorious German mercenary and former member of Hitler’s Wehrmacht Siegfried “Kongo” Müller. As Timothy Brown notes, the film “presented a golden opportunity to protest against racism, against the persistence of colonial exploitation, and against the continuing presence of fascism.”⁷⁷ Despite a large police presence outside the Astor Theater on August 2, 1966, some fifty demonstrators managed to storm the cinema, and Viva Maria! members Fritz Teufel and Volker Gebbert closed the screen’s curtains. The next day seven hundred students again assembled at the Astor Theater to protest the film and the arrest of eight activists the night before. Once more, activists disrupted the film, this time using stink bombs. Although 43 more people were arrested that evening, the intervention succeeded. On August 5, West Berlin’s police commissioner ordered the film’s cancelation due to “communist infiltration” at the screenings.⁷⁸ The *Africa Addio* protests heightened the appeal of illegal forms of direct action for spurring mass spontaneous intervention, specifically in solidarity with Third World struggles. Moreover, it helped solidify the antiauthoritarian influence within the SDS. At the organization’s annual national meeting in September 1966, Reimut Reiche and Peter Gang, two activists sympathetic to the antiauthoritarian approach, were elected to lead the SDS.⁷⁹

Self-Liberating Praxis

As a model of antiauthoritarian organization, the foco looked to advance struggle by transforming those who took part in an action. Che Guevara argued that revolution involved more than structural changes; it demanded revolutionizing the needs and desires of individuals themselves. “To build communism,” he declared, “it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man and woman.”⁸⁰ In his defense of the poster action, Dutschke similarly emphasized the need to create a “new person” in the course of political struggle. One could not, he argued through direct reference to Guevara, be a guerilla “by night” and “belong to capital during the day.”⁸¹ But how was such profound subjective transformation to take place in a country like West Germany? To answer this question, antiauthoritarians

⁷⁶ Quoted in Timothy S Brown, “‘1968’ East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History,” *American Historical Review*, no. 114 (February 2009): 76.. See also Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:293–296; Nils Seibert, “Proteste Gegen Den Film Africa Addio. Ein Beispiel Für Antirassismus in Den 60er-Jahren,” in *Widerstandsbewegungen. Antirassismus Zwischen Alltag & Aktion*, Ed. Interface, ed. Interface (Berlin: Assoziation A, 2005), 280–289.

⁷⁷ Brown, “‘1968’ East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History,” 76.

⁷⁸ For an account of the action, see Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 71–74. For a news report, see “‘Africa Addio’ Am Kurfürstendamm Abgesetzt,” *Die Welt*, August 6, 1966.

⁷⁹ Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund Nach Der Trennung Von Der SPD*, 1: 1960:–67:155.

⁸⁰ Che Guevara, “Man and Socialism in Cuba,” trans. Margarita Zimmermann, *Marxists Internet Archive*, 1965, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm>.

⁸¹ Quoted in Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:237.

embraced Frantz Fanon's synthesis of psychoanalytic and Marxist thought as a way to adapt the social-psychological concerns of critical theory with antiauthoritarian praxis. Fanon's work encouraged solidarity with decolonization struggles, but also resonated with the antiauthoritarian emphasis on direct action.

Unlike Guevara, the Martiniquan psychoanalyst's thoughts on colonized subjectivity offered West Germans little in terms of organizational models. Antiauthoritarians read Fanon for his theory of decolonization and emphasis on the psychic liberation that must accompany any revolutionary struggle. Fanon had worked in Algeria as a psychiatrist during the 1950s, becoming involved in the anti-colonial struggle against the French that began in 1954. First published in French in 1961, Fanon's classic text on colonial psychopathology, *Wretched of the Earth*, was not officially available in German translation until 1966. Nevertheless, his ideas were in circulation well before this date. In December 1964, a member of the International Working Group introduced Dutschke and others to Fanon's central ideas.⁸² At this time, SDS member Traugott König was preparing a German translation of Fanon's influential first chapter, "On Violence," which the journal *Kursbuch* published in August 1965.⁸³

Fanon's text authorized several key antiauthoritarian positions. In addition to positioning colonized experience at the center of world history, Fanon delineated a particular role for West Europeans to play in the struggle against imperialism. The conclusion to his first chapter explicitly called for "those who kept" the colonized in "slavery for centuries" to aid in the rehabilitation process.⁸⁴ Fanon was not so naive as to expect assistance from European governments. Instead he assigned "the colossal task" to:

[...]the European masses who would do well to confess that they have often rallied behind the position of our common masters on colonial issues. In order to do this, the European masses must first of all decide to wake up, put on their thinking caps and stop playing the irresponsible game of Sleeping Beauty.⁸⁵

Fanon's generalization of the European subject indexed his belief that "European workers" had failed to fulfill the "mission that was designated to them." In other words, they had missed the moment to realize their revolutionary potential.⁸⁶ This indictment of the European working class suited the perspective of antiauthoritarians in West Germany, as did the necessity Fanon placed on the "masses" of Europe to join decolonization struggles. Ironically, of course, most of the West German activists Fanon's text influenced would ignore the migrant labor population that would soon emerge in their own country.

Most important for the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling was Fanon's argument that "colonized man liberates himself in and through violence."⁸⁷ Fanon's perspective worked to validate the antiauthoritarian emphasis on the transformative psychic effect of direct action. For

⁸² Dutschke, "Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus," 62.

⁸³ Frantz Fanon, "Von Der Gewalt," trans. Traugott König, *Kursbuch*, no. 2 (August 1965): 1–55; Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:225.

⁸⁴ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 61.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

Fanon, subjective liberation must accompany social liberation. The experience of performing violence, he argued, promised to combine these dual but hardly distinct imperatives:

At the individual level, violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them, and restores their self-confidence. Even if the armed struggle has been symbolic, and even if they have been demobilized by rapid decolonization, the people have time to realize that liberation was the achievement of each and every one and no special merit should go to the leader. [...] Enlightened by violence, the people's consciousness revels against any pacification. [...] Any attempt at mystification in the long term becomes virtually impossible.⁸⁸

And like Guevara's theory, Fanon claimed the aim of struggle to be "to create a new man."⁸⁹ There is little doubt, of course, that the German New Left foregrounded their own experiences when reading Fanon. For example, in her 1966 review of *The Wretched of the Earth* published in the SDS journal *Neue Kritik*, Renate Zahar celebrated Fanon for being the first to "examine the psychological mechanisms of exploitation and alienation" and for realizing that "true liberation" meant liberation from both objective and subjective forms of oppression. Like Zahar, antiauthoritarians celebrated Fanon for reconciling Marxism and psychoanalysis, but downplayed the specific historical conditions in which he was writing and living.⁹⁰ As Quinn Slobodian has argued, the predominantly white antiauthoritarian movement in West Germany embraced Fanon's call for the creation of a "new man" as the means to overcome the internalized dehumanization of colonial socialization "without the burden of racialized experience."⁹¹ The strikingly different reception *The Wretched of the Earth* received compared to Fanon's classic *Black Skin, White Mask* perhaps best evidences the extent to which antiauthoritarians ignored this crucial dynamic of Fanon's thought: *Black Skin, White Mask* was not even translated into German until 1980.

Fanon's notion of violence as self-liberating praxis profoundly shaped performative antiauthoritarianism. In a 1968 essay, Dutschke neatly synthesized critical theory with the thought of Fanon. He affirmed that Germany's military defeat in World War II had not eliminated "the foundations for the personality character of fascism." Governing institutions, systems of education, and family structures all provided the "preconditions for the ambivalent, sado-masochistic attitude of the authoritarian personality."⁹² According to Dutschke, "those of us who have grown up in an authoritarian society have only one chance to break our authoritarian character structures," to create "ourselves" anew. Following Fanon and Guevara, he called for the "education" and "development of new people" without which "the permanent revolution is impossible." Dutschke declared that such a "process of education" was "only possible and sensible in conflict with the existing structures" responsible for creating people as they were.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 51–52.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 239.

⁹⁰ Renate Zahar, "Frantz Fanons Antikolonialistisches Manifest," *Neue Kritik*, no. 38–39 (1966): 49.

⁹¹ Quinn Slobodian, *Radical Empathy: The Third World and the New Left in 1960s West Germany* (Dissertation: New York University, 2008), 297.

⁹² Dutschke, "Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus," 58.

Thus, he called for individuals to become “‘new people’ in conflict with” the “system of domination.”⁹³ This logic of self-liberating praxis was similar to Fanon’s theory, but whereas Fanon spoke of liberation from colonized subjectivity, West Germans increasingly claimed that engineered confrontations with authority could undo authoritarian character structures. The application of Fanon’s recommendations to the West German context compromised the historical experience that so defined Fanon’s theory. In 1966 West Germany, self-liberating praxis would take the form of illegal direct action. Posting incendiary fliers, disrupting film screenings, and throwing eggs at government buildings were categorically distinct from the violence of armed decolonizing struggle. While figures like Dutschke certainly acknowledged these differences, the question of what was lost in conflating colonized subjectivity with the authoritarian personality went unanswered. This would continue to be the case for the West German terrorist cells who took up arms in the early 1970s. This does not change the fact that the work of Fanon and Guevara helped antiauthoritarian activists update the earlier socio-psychological perspective of the Frankfurt School, shaping the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling in the process.

Spaßguerilla and Participation

The *Africa Addio* protests anticipated a fall of escalating protest in West Berlin, which featured anti-war marches, disruptions of public events, as well as more creative interventions led by the growing antiauthoritarian community. The emergence of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling at this time must be understood against the backdrop of the economic and political crises of the time. A year earlier, the *Wirtschaftswunder* that had so defined West German economic and political life since the early 1950s had begun to sputter. Economic growth fell from 6.2 percent in 1964 to 4.5 percent in 1965 with inflation rising to 4 percent. In the span of just a year unemployment had doubled, on its way to a peak of 500,000 by 1967. In the midst of this economic crisis, Chancellor Ludwig Erhard stuck by his ordoliberal market policy, refusing to raise taxes to cover the growing budget deficit.⁹⁴ Erhard’s tepid response to the intensifying crisis quickly yielded political consequences. The CDU’s coalition with the libertarian Free Democratic Party dissolved, and Erhard’s own party turned on him, sealing his fate as Chancellor. In the fall of 1966, the CDU nominated Kurt Georg Kiesinger to replace Erhard. That December, the SPD, anxious to consolidate its status as a mainstream party, agreed to join the CDU in a “Grand Coalition,” which took control of 95 percent of the seats in the Bundestag. This partnership and the fact that the two top officials of the federal government, Kiesinger and President Heinrich Lübke, had both been Nazis prompted the formation of what came to be known as the “*Außerparlamentarische Opposition*” (Extra-Parliamentary Opposition, or APO), a loosely connected coalition of liberal, socialist, and anarchist groupings, which included the SDS. These developments accompanied a turbulent season of protest, culminating in a pair of protest events that were exemplary of performative antiauthoritarianism.

⁹³ Ibid., 77.

⁹⁴ William Carr, *A History of Germany, 1815-1990* (London: E. Arnold, 1991), 383.

The first unfolded on December 10, 1966 and involved transforming a by-then conventional demonstration against the war in Vietnam into something unprecedented. The liberal humanitarian coalition the *Kampagne für Abrüstung* (Campaign for Disarmament, or KfA) had organized the action on the occasion of Human Rights Day. A Saturday afternoon march down the Kurfürstendamm, West Berlin's main shopping street, was to conclude in a rally near Wittenbergplatz. Just days before the demonstration, however, the Berlin Senate restricted the march route to barely trafficked streets, claiming concern that the demonstration would disrupt pre-Christmas shopping. Since the egging of the Amerika-Haus in February, the city government had implemented a de facto policy that effectively banned demonstrations in the center of the city. While more traditionalist groups like the KfA and the Argument Club abided by such strictures, many antiauthoritarians argued that obedience only allowed the government to maintain a veneer of support for free speech all while curtailing it.⁹⁵ The West Berlin SDS decided to violate the prescribed march route, and instead experiment with new "demonstration techniques."⁹⁶

The day of the planned demonstration two thousand people gathered outside the Spichernstraße U-Bahn station.⁹⁷ As soon as the march departed, however, some two hundred demonstrators broke away, running in the direction of the Kurfürstendamm. Incensed over the disobedience, police charged the crowd with batons, arresting eleven students and confiscating some fifty satirical fliers that read slogans like "*Weihnachswünsche werden wahr*—Bombs made in USA" (Christmas wishes coming true—Bombs made in USA; English in original). At the rally, several hundred demonstrators left Wittenbergplatz, heading back in the direction of the Kurfürstendamm where a police barricade kept them from going any farther. Meanwhile, several SDS activists led by Dieter Kunzelmann and other future members of Kommune 1 staged what they called a *Weihnachtspolitisches Happening* (Political Christmas Happening). In front of the historic Café Kranzler, they set up a Christmas tree and draped it with a US flag and a poster that read, "*Spießler aller Länder, vereinigt euch*" (Bourgeoisie of the world, unite). Next to the tree, they positioned paper-maché busts of US President Lyndon Johnson and Walter Ulbricht, the General Secretary of East Germany. The small group concluded the happening by setting the tree on fire. The provocation enraged police who were already busy keeping track of eight hundred other demonstrators still gathered in the area singing German Christmas carols amongst the busy crowds of Christmas shoppers. In an attempt to regain control of the situation, officers feverishly detained passersby, arbitrarily arresting 76 people for disturbing the peace and resisting arrest.

The juxtapositions between the KfA's adherence to the march route and the SDS' willing disobedience were illustrative of the tensions between traditionalists and antiauthoritarians at the time. As a public performance of dissent, the *Weihnachtspolitisches Happening* was a collage of

⁹⁵ See Hermann, "Die „Rote Garde“ Von Berlin: Zwanzig Marxistische Studenten Lassen Die Stadt Erbeben."

⁹⁶ Bernd Rabehl, "Von Der Antiautoritäre Bewegung Zur Sozialistischen Opposition," in *Rebellion Der Studenten Oder Die Neue Opposition*, ed. Uwe Bergmann et al. (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), 167.

⁹⁷ For details on the demonstration, see Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:310–311. Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 93. For a brief analysis, see Simon Teune, "Humour as a Guerrilla Tactic: The West German: Student Movement's Mockery of the Establishment," *International Review of Social History*, no. 52 (2007): 120.

New Left sentiment that tethered together playfulness and militancy. Its effigies of Johnson and Ulbrecht travestied the American war in Vietnam and the conditions of the Cold War more generally. The flaming Christmas tree highlighted the stark contrast between the consumerism of West Germany's Christmas season and its dialectical counterpoint in the brutal war barreling on in Vietnam. Moreover, the climatic conflagration suggested the tenuousness of the peace that West Germans enjoyed, a reminder of the fires that raged in Berlin barely two decades earlier. But what concerned police and traditionalists most was the happening's degree of disobedience. Publicly setting a tree on fire took the SDS' decision to flout the prescribed march to another level. The irreverent character of the demonstration was as much a response to the city government as it was to the staid protest methods of traditionalists who looked askance at the provocation. The KfA, for example, distanced itself from the events, issuing a press release that claimed such actions only exacerbated the "prevailing distrust and preexisting prejudices" against the movement.⁹⁸

The confrontations with police that the action provoked only encouraged the West Berlin antiauthoritarians, who numbered in the hundreds by December 1967. In his commentary on the action, Bernd Rabehl celebrated activists for having "discovered" a "new demonstration tactic," that of leading "girls and young school boys" into confrontation with "the guardians of order."⁹⁹ For Rabehl and others, the police response—especially the arrests of Christmas shoppers—made tangible the violence that undergirded West Germany's liberal democracy. Over the next several days, activists met to discuss their experiences of December 10. They celebrated the demonstration for revealing the city's intolerance toward protest. Even more importantly, many claimed that disobeying and confronting police had made for a transformative experience.

In the midst of these reflections, the Dutch writer Leo Klatzer delivered a lecture in West Berlin on the Provos, a political and countercultural movement based in Amsterdam. Founded in 1965, the Provos integrated happenings with political protest to create colorful actions that often drew brutal reactions from police.¹⁰⁰ Klatzer's discussion of the Provos' humorous guerrilla tactics gave the West Berlin antiauthoritarians several ideas they would put into practice later that week. In particular, activists took seriously what it would mean to "not panic when the police came."¹⁰¹ Activists believed that to respond to police with fear or alarm meant taking their authority seriously, thereby subscribing themselves to it. To use the language Wolfgang Lefevre employed in his account of these discussions, activists paid close attention to how such scenes of subjection impacted the "psychic behaviors" of "subjects [*Untertanen*]."¹⁰² The Provos tactic of reacting to police with humor and irony not only allowed for an altogether different sort of

⁹⁸ Quoted in Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:311.

⁹⁹ Rabehl, "Von Der Antiautoritäre Bewegung Zur Sozialistischen Opposition," 167.

¹⁰⁰ Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 94; Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:311. On the Provos, see L. M Bogad, *Electoral Guerilla Theatre: Speaking Mirth to Power* (New York; London: Routledge, 2005), 44–61. Dieter Kunzelmann claims that he and Dutschke were in contact with the Provos as early as 1964 when they traveled to Amsterdam. Dieter Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!: Bilder aus meinem Leben* (Berlin: Transit, 1998), 47.

¹⁰¹ Wolfgang Lefevre quoted in Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:311.

¹⁰² Ibid.

message to be communicated publicly, but more importantly, it entailed assuming a different comportment toward authority. These conversations guided the planning for an even more unconventional protest on December 17. One flier announcing the demonstration declared:

So that we don't let ourselves get beat up, to not be the helpless objects of aggressive young people in police uniforms, we will not be demonstrating in the old form, but rather in groups—as pedestrians.¹⁰³

The flier's language exemplified the aims of the so-called *Spaziergangs-Demonstration* (Pedestrian Demonstration). “This *Spa-Pro* [short for Pedestrian Protest] tactic,” the flier explained, “wants to make the fossilized legality look ridiculous, wants to lay bare the irrationality of the rational order, wants to use fun to show that the models and guiding principles of this society are foolish.” The very attempt to make authority look “ridiculous” was an endeavor to undermine and eliminate such authority, an effort antiauthoritarians believed carried psychic consequences for the person doing the ridiculing.

On the afternoon of Saturday, December 17, two hundred demonstrators gathered in front of Café Kranzler on the Kurfürstendamm—the site of the *Weihnachtspolitisches Happening* a week earlier—before disappearing into the crowd of Christmas shoppers.¹⁰⁴ At the sound of a child's toy trumpet, the demonstrators would reassemble temporarily as a marching bloc and then disperse again. While intermingled with the crowd, demonstrators took the opportunity to hand out fliers and talk with passersby about the war in Vietnam and the police repression a week earlier. They repeated this action several times while singing Christmas carols and issuing mocking chants like “*Keine Keilerei/ Mit der Polizei*” (Forego fisticuffs/with the cops) and “*Kommt die Polizei vorbei/ gehen wir an ihr vorbei/ an der nächsten Ecke dann/ fängt das Spiel von vorne an*” (When the police come by/ we'll go right on past/ at the next corner/ the game will start again).¹⁰⁵ The description of the demonstration as a “game” was telling; it pointed to the form of the action as well as the irreverent relation being developed toward the some hundreds of police on hand. Rather than protest against the police, however, demonstrators claimed to be supporting them. One sarcastic flier even referred to the police as the “last pillar of democracy” given the recent formation of the Grand Coalition:

We are ‘walking’ for the Police!!! We demand a 35-hour week for them so they can have more time for reading, relaxing with their brides and wives to get rid of aggression by making love, more time for discussion so they can explain democracy to old passersby.¹⁰⁶

The flier listed several demands on behalf of the police, including that “‘modern’ equipment” be distributed to each officer. Instead of batons, activists wanted police to be equipped with candy for children, contraceptives for teenagers, and pornography for elderly men. They even called for pay raises to police. This dissimulative support read as a clear refusal of police authority. The repeated dispersal and reassembly of demonstrators left officers with little idea how to react.

¹⁰³ See the flier reproduced in Kommune 1, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder, unpaginated

¹⁰⁴ See Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:312.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ See the flier reproduced in Kommune 1, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder, unpaginated.

Under strict orders to break up the unpermitted demonstration, police began arresting anyone they suspected of participating in the protest. In total, 74 people were arrested, among them unsuspecting teenagers and retirees shopping for Christmas presents.¹⁰⁷

Among those arrested that day was Kai Hermann, editor-in-chief of the popular weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*. In an article reflecting on his experience, Hermann celebrated the *Spaziergangs-Demonstration* for transforming from a “planned little amusement” into a “Super Happening.”¹⁰⁸ The demonstration achieved its “goal” of making “fossilized authority” look ridiculous. But this was not the only aim of the action, as Hermann explained. By ridiculing police, activists looked to transform their own comportment toward authority. The way the action unfolded, however, had the unintended consequence of subjecting passersby to arrest and injury. For these unlucky individuals, Hermann suggested, authority was made to seem “dangerously ridiculous.” Rather than confront police directly, this demonstration marked the start of a more oblique approach to subverting authority by targeting the foundations of its legitimacy. The emphasis on irony suited the demonstration’s organizing principle of circumvention, a logic inspired by guerilla warfare. Hermann himself framed the demonstration in such terms. Considering that any “frontal attack” on “established power” would likely end in failure, activists had to discover “new forms of struggles: not only to demonstrate for Vietnam, but also to learn from the Vietcong.”¹⁰⁹ This *Spaßguerilla* (fun guerrilla) style of direct action, as it came to be known, further appealed to antiauthoritarians as an opportunity to break with traditional forms of protest.¹¹⁰ “We must organize ourselves, without statutes, without an executive council, without reproducing this society in miniature,” Viva Maria! activists wrote in the days following. They averred that “no old organization” would suffice. The project had to be to “find our methods by ourselves.”¹¹¹ For antiauthoritarian activists, organization and tactics were tightly woven together. As Viva Maria! declared, “Our organization must be the demonstration. There we can grasp that our individual problems are all of our problems. Are all political!”¹¹²

Dutschke described the *Spaziergangs-Demonstration* as a model of “self-education and the process of self-enlightenment.” This held true, he argued, even for the unsuspecting targets of police repression. Dutschke judged the *Spaziergangs-Demonstration* to be more ethical than mass actions organized by unions and other hierarchical political groups since it privileged the “inner transformation of those participating.”¹¹³ Conventional marches and demonstrations, by contrast, organized participants into mass ornaments and gave little attention to the

¹⁰⁷ Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:311–312.

¹⁰⁸ Hermann, “Die „Rote Garde“ Von Berlin: Zwanzig Marxistische Studenten Lassen Die Stadt Erbeben.” Hermann was one of two journalists arrested.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ On the origins and legacy of Spassguerilla, see Teune, “Humour as a Guerrilla Tactic: The West German: Student Movement’s Mockery of the Establishment”; Fritz Teufel, *Märchen aus der Spassgerilja* (Hamburg: Verlag Roter Funke, 1980).

¹¹¹ “Entwurf III: Wie oft demonstrierten wir für Vietnam?,” reproduced in Kommune 1, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder, unpaginated.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Dutschke, “Von Anti-Semitismus Zum Anti-Kommunismus,” 76.

immediacy of participation. Dutschke derided this approach as “manipulation by elites.”¹¹⁴ Antiauthoritarian activists deemed the experience of participation in an action to be even more crucial than the message it communicated. According to Dutschke, to place unsuspecting individuals in confrontation with authority could expose to them “the latent and manifest irrationality of the system, the terror in the institutions and the brutality of the police.” He contended that such experiences could undermine “the authoritarian structure of the bourgeois character” by producing understanding of the “reification and alienation” that goes unnoticed in everyday life.¹¹⁵ Dutschke prized direct action for making it imaginable that “the system as a whole could be toppled in the future.”¹¹⁶ In short, antiauthoritarian activists believed the opportunity to act rather than be acted upon—be it by the police or by political “elites”—could condition a sense of agency and possibility, if only for a fleeting moment.

The Psycho-Kommune

No group better personified the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling—its chief characteristics as well as its contradictions—than Kommune 1. Yet the public spectacles and colorful scandals Kommune 1 caused has led scholars to focus attention primarily on the demonstrative character of their praxis. Kathrin Fahlenbrach, for example, positions Kommune 1 as emblematic of the German New Left’s use of the “expressive” and “instrumental” aspects of “protest-communication.”¹¹⁷ Within the terms of her analysis, Kommune 1 appears as a phenomenon staged primarily for the media and public consumption. In a notable article on Kommune 1 from 1967, the journalist Ulrike Meinhof lauded Kommune 1 for finding “very amusing ways to break down the conspiracy of silence that oppositional activity in the Federal Republic is usually met with.” Yet Meinhof went on to rebuke the Kommunards for prioritizing “private exhibitionism” over raising public awareness on issues like the war in Vietnam.¹¹⁸ Given the zeal the Kommunards displayed for performing in front of cameras, the emphasis Fahlenbrach and Meinhof place on the demonstrative character of Kommune 1’s interventions is understandable. At the same time, this approach risks obscuring the principle of psychic transformation that guided even their most publicized interventions. Kommune 1 exemplified the confluence of the demonstrative and performative dimensions of antiauthoritarian direct action.

Although Kommune 1 did not form until early 1967, the conversations that led to its founding first took place in July 1966 when antiauthoritarian activists from Munich and West

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 75. Demonstrations, he wrote, need to be “conceptualized as a permanent learning process, as an unbroken attempt of transforming their own character structure” (76-77).

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 76.

¹¹⁷ Kathrin Fahlenbrach, “Protestinszenierungen: Die Studentenbewegung im Spannungsfeld von Kultur-Revolution und Medien-Evolution,” in *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*, ed. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2007), 15. See also Kathrin Fahlenbrach, *Protest-Inszenierungen: Visuelle Kommunikation und kollektive Identitäten in Protestbewegungen* (Wiesbaden: Westdt. Verl., 2002).

¹¹⁸ Ulrike Marie Meinhof, “Napalm and Pudding,” in *Everybody Talks About the Weather— We Don’t: The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof*, ed. Karin Bauer, trans. Luise von Flotow (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 229.

Berlin gathered at a villa on Lake Kochel in Bavaria. Dieter Kunzelmann had organized the meeting to determine a way forward for the burgeoning antiauthoritarian movement. Over the course of ten days, the thirteen activists present—mostly members of Subversive Aktion and Viva Maria!—brainstormed new forms of action and organization.¹¹⁹ “Herbert Marcuse’s analysis of the psychological dimension of liberation,” Bernd Rabehl later recalled, “was the main topic of discussion.”¹²⁰ The most radical proposal came from Kunzelmann who suggested an experiment in communal living. Kunzelmann embraced the psychic emphasis of antiauthoritarianism to such a degree that he posited collective therapy aimed at undoing the authoritarian personality as the commune’s primary task.¹²¹ Despite some reservations, those gathered in Kochel warmly received Kunzelmann’s plan and chose to locate the commune in West Berlin.¹²²

At the end of summer, Kunzelmann and the rest of the Munich group moved to West Berlin to begin organizing the commune. The early planning took place in the “Colloquium,” a working group Dutschke had founded some months earlier as the “praxis-discussion wing in the SDS.”¹²³ Divisions quickly emerged among the approximately thirty activists involved in these early discussions. One circle around Kunzelmann pushed a vision for a commune based on the conviction that activists must change themselves before they could intervene into society in a meaningful way. In a manifesto written and circulated in late November, “Notes for the Founding of Revolutionary Communes in the Metropolises,” Kunzelmann described the commune as an anti-repressive collective organization that rejected the “bourgeois individual.” “The commune is only effective in initiating system-changing praxis directed outside,” he asserted, “if the individuals within the commune have changed themselves.” Kunzelmann stress that the commune should be dedicated to the “sublation of bourgeois relations of dependence (marriage, rights of ownership to husband, wife, and child etc.), the destruction of the private sphere and of all preformed everyday banality, habits, and forms of reification.” By necessity,

¹¹⁹ See Rabehl, “Die Provokationselite,” 429–430; Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 47–49. The exact date of the meeting has been the cause of disagreement among historians, but this has been resolved following statements by different participants that they remember watching the World Cup at night during these days. The 1966 World Cup took place from July 11 to July 30. Through research of memoirs, notes, and secondary literature, Alexander Holmig has concluded that the participants from West Berlin included Dutschke, his wife Gretchen, Rabehl, Hans-Joachim Hamesiter, Horst Kurnitzky, Elke and Gertude Hemmer and their 1 1/2 year old son. From Munich, Kunzelmann was joined by Dagmar Seehuber, Marion Stergar, Lothar Menne, Inge Presser, and Volker Böckelmann. See Alexander Holmig, “Wenn’s Der Wahrheits(er)findung Dient: Wirken Und Wirkung Der Kommune I” (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, 2004), 34.

¹²⁰ Rabehl, “Die Provokationselite,” 429.

¹²¹ Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 70.

¹²² As Kunzelmann explains in his memoirs, “Berlin was ripe for spectacle.” Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 49.

¹²³ *Kommune 2, Versuch Der Revolutionierung Des Bürgerlichen Individuums. Kollektives Leben Mit Politischer Arbeit Verbinden.* (Berlin: Oberbaumpresse, 1969), 21. By October, the number interested in the Kommune project had grown to almost thirty people, and on November 5 the Kommune-circle interrupted the nation-wide meeting of the SDS to present their idea. See Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:306–309.

the commune would be a “full-time job,” a new form and way of living that aimed at violating the “the game rules of a society of total administration.”¹²⁴

Although most involved in these early discussions shared Kunzelmann’s interest in the subjective dimension of revolutionary action, some disagreed with how much he privileged the commune’s therapeutic-function. Dutschke and Rabehl, for example, did not envision the commune as a *Therapiegemeinschaft* (therapy community). Instead they championed a *Kampfgemeinschaft* (community of struggle) whose members would experiment with and devise new forms of political intervention.¹²⁵ Their idea of a commune was not predicated on immediately dissolving all existing forms of life; in fact, their commune did not even entail collective living. Eike Hemmer and several students affiliated with the Argument Club posited a third alternative. They favored a living collective that would work closely with groups like the SDS.¹²⁶

On New Year’s Eve 1966, after months of discussion, the three groups decided to go their separate ways. Calling themselves Kommune 1, the circle around Kunzelmann released a statement at the end of January in which they declared it necessary to shelve political work “outwards” in favor of focusing on “self-revolution.”¹²⁷ Finally, on February 19, 1967, after a fruitless month-long search for an apartment large enough to house ten people, Kommune 1 decided to temporarily move into two apartments belonging to Uwe Johnson and Hans-Magnus Enzensberger. Both writers were out of town and had left their keys with Enzensberger’s ex-wife Dagrun. Neither knew what their homes were being used for. At the beginning of March, Kommune 1 moved into a larger apartment belonging to Johnson, still unbeknownst to him. The very decision to move in together was radical for the time; in postwar West Germany, it was nearly unheard of for a group of unmarried young people to live together.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Dieter Kunzelmann, “Notizen zur Gründung revolutionärer Kommunen in den Metropolen,” reproduced in Kommune 1, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder, unpaginated.

¹²⁵ For more on the differences, see Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:315–317; Rabehl, “Die Provokationselite,” 430–435.

¹²⁶ Together with Raspe, Rainer Langhans, and other, Hemmer would eventually found this group in the SDS headquarters in January 1967, under the name Kommune 2. See Kommune 2, *Versuch Der Revolutionierung Des Bürgerlichen. Individuums. Kollektives Leben Mit Politischer Arbeit Verbinden.*, 2; Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:317–318.

¹²⁷ “Circular on our Development up until Now,” in Kommune 1, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder, unpaginated. The response from other antiauthoritarian activist was withering. In a public discussion about the document. Bernd Rabehl decried Kommune 1 as a “sectarian isolation of the political movement.” Kommune 2, *Versuch Der Revolutionierung Des Bürgerlichen. Individuums. Kollektives Leben Mit Politischer Arbeit Verbinden.*, 36. See also Holmig, “Wenn’s Der Wahrheits(er)findung Dient: Wirken Und Wirkung Der Kommune 1,” 41–43.

¹²⁸ Ulrich, Hameister, Dorothea, Volker, Dagrun and her son Tanaquil moved into Enzensberger’s apartment while Kunzelmann, Dagmar, Teufel, and Detlef moved into Johnson’s atelier. See Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 105. This initial arrangement was quite different from the architectural plan of the “Kommunehaus” developed earlier in October 1966: a two story house with large open rooms, no doors and no privacy. The plans were drawn up by the architect Andreas Reidemester. See Rabehl, “Die Provokationselite,” 432–433. The decision of Kommune 1 to stay in Johnson’s apartment would yield several consequences discussed below, including the end of the friendship between Johnson and Hans-Magnus Enzensberger. See their published correspondence Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Uwe Johnson, *fuer Zwecke der brutalen Verstaendigung*, ed. Henning Marmulla and Claus Kröger (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009).

At Kunzelmann's behest, Kommune 1 sequestered itself from the outside world.¹²⁹ They dedicated most of their time to collective therapy sessions they called "psycho-discussions." Kommune 1 based its approach on a clinical model devised by Günther Ammon, a controversial West Berlin psychoanalyst who had developed an experimental approach that claimed to combine Marxism and psychoanalysis.¹³⁰ Though the psycho-discussions aimed at helping the members of Kommune 1 shed their bourgeois ties while rooting out the authoritarian personality, more often than not, the sessions devolved into long, drawn-out exchanges. Later Kommune member Michael "Bommi" Baumann described them as having a "sado-masochistic character."¹³¹ Other Kommunards disparagingly labeled the therapy as "terrorist self-analysis" and "psycho-terror."¹³²

In his 1968 reflection on West German antiauthoritarianism, *Sexuality and Class Struggle*, former SDS chair Reimut Reiche accused Kommune 1 of misreading and misapplying the work of Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse. They had correctly recognized the chief social-psychological problem as "repressive desublimation," but their "attempt to deal with it" was sorely "misconceived." Writing from his own personal involvement in the West German antiauthoritarian milieu, Reiche declared that Kommune 1's "psychoanalytic group therapy" had resulted in "the more psychologically stable" members bullying the others.¹³³ Instead of fulfilling the task left uncompleted by the bourgeois family structure—"to provide protection against the hostile environment"—Kommune 1's therapy sessions were "as terroristic as might be expected."¹³⁴ The group attempts at collective therapy substituted social domination with the more intimate repression of the commune.

Central to Kommune 1's program was the elimination of monogamous relations, which had been inspired by a selective reading of the German psychoanalyst, Wilhelm Reich. Much-maligned within both communist and psychiatric circles in the 1930s for his attempts to merge Marxism with psychoanalysis, Reich's iconoclastic understanding of fascism as both a psychological structure and cultural condition earned a huge following in the German New Left of the 1960s.¹³⁵ In works like *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*—published in 1933, the same year as Hitler's *Machtergreifung*, Reich argued that the roots of human cruelty can be traced to the repression of sexual desires, especially in children. If fascism is to be averted, Reich asserted,

¹²⁹ They pooled together their money earned primarily through the odd jobs of its members, which included printing and selling pirated copies of out of print or hard to get works of critical and political theory. Kommune 1 also sold copies of Mao's Little Red book which they smuggled into West Germany from the Chinese embassy in East Berlin. See Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 109–110.

¹³⁰ See Holmig, "Wenn's Der Wahrheits(er)findung Dient: Wirken Und Wirkung Der Kommune I," 48.

¹³¹ Michael Baumann, *How it all Began: The Personal Account of a West German Urban Guerrilla*, trans. Helene Ellenbogen and Wayne Parker (Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000), 19.

¹³² Ulrich Enzensberger quoted in Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke*, 62.

¹³³ Reimut Reiche, *Sexuality and Class Struggle*, trans. Susam Bennett (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 150.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 154; 151.

¹³⁵ As Dagmar Herzog claims, "Wilhelm Reich's influence on the early New Left in West Germany was unparalleled. No other intellectual so moved the student movement in its early days, and to a degree unmatched either in the United States or other Western European nations." Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 106.

child sexuality need not just be tolerated, but encouraged.¹³⁶ Although details from the early period of Kommune 1 are unclear, surviving notes from group discussions suggest that their reading of Reich led to experiments with group sexuality that were far from liberating. The various love triangles that emerged created more tensions within the group than they resolved. Reimut Reiche criticized the contradiction between Kommune 1's stated refusal of political programmism and its espousal of a program of "compulsory promiscuity" for which most members were not "psychologically prepared."¹³⁷ Kommune 1, according to Reiche:

[...] wanted to destroy repressive sexual liberation. Its alternative, however, was an abstract morality of liberation which, because individuals did not only suffer from the old morality, but were imbued with it through and through, had to be forced upon them 'here and now.'¹³⁸

He rejected the Kommunards' claim that all monogamous sexual relationships were repressive. The "average exclusive relationship" is far less exploitive, and "above all less productive of neurosis," Reiche argued, than enforced "compulsive promiscuity."¹³⁹ In Reiche's withering opinion, Kommune 1 was the inverse of what antiauthoritarianism should be: "The subjectively revolutionary attitude becomes objectively counter-revolutionary when it leads people to believe that all their hopes can be fulfilled today, all their sufferings done away with today."¹⁴⁰ Such thinking, Reiche asserted, necessarily led to either complacency or resignation.

As the weeks passed, several members of Kommune 1 grew frustrated with their self-imposed estrangement from the outside world and began questioning the logic of their separation from the SDS.¹⁴¹ During a discussion on March 20—barely a month after the founding of Kommune 1—Fritz Teufel voiced discontent with what he saw as the reproduction of authoritarian structures within the group itself:

The concepts of the commune have become mere phrases instead of critique and self-critique. The attempts at collective break-throughs have produced an intolerable split that

¹³⁶ See Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980); Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Noonday Press, 1973). For more on Reich's confrontations with Marxist and psychoanalytic circles of his time, see Paul A. Robinson, *The Freudian Left: Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 28–59; Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, 86.

¹³⁷ Reiche, *Sexuality and Class Struggle*, 154; 151.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁴¹ During one group meeting Ulrich Enzensberger questioned the logic of their separation from the SDS: "I don't see the possibility of solving my problems in further separation [with the SDS, etc.]" APO-Archiv, "Justiz I" folder, Yellow Notebook, 44. The following summary of these early conversations draws on two notebooks of hand-written notes the Kommunards took to document their early conversations. The notebooks were confiscated by German police on April 5 during a raid on Kommune 1. Their contents were transcribed and annotated by the police. Today the notes offer one of the most valuable looks into the early days of Kommune 1, which even former members of Kommune 1 have consulted for their own memoirs. The notebooks are located today in APO-A, "Justiz I" folder. To indicate from which notebook I am drawing information, I refer to them as the "Yellow Notebook" and the "Red Notebook." For a summary of these folders see Rabehl, "Die Provokationselite," 438–454.

isn't natural but is the result of the exercise of authority. There is no difference between authority and group authority. [...] Why Kommune? I could just bum around.¹⁴² Their therapy sessions had yielded psychic effects, but not the liberating kind they sought. The Kommunards concluded that revolutionizing their daily lives would demand an even more dramatic break with bourgeois society, one generated in direct antagonism toward society. As one option, Teufel proposed Kommune 1 perform “anarchist actions against the apparatus.”¹⁴³ Although some remained wary of Teufel's suggestion, most voted to end their isolation by participating in an anti-Vietnam War march planned for March 26.¹⁴⁴ Like previous demonstrations, this protest escalated when activists again attacked the Amerika-Haus, this time using flour, eggs, and paint. In the march that followed, Kunzelmann and Dagrūn Enzensberger were arrested for throwing red paint on a police van.¹⁴⁵

The arrests triggered discussions within Kommune 1 on how illegal forms of direct action could help them break psychically with society.¹⁴⁶ Dagrūn Enzensberger described to the rest of Kommune 1 the liberating character of being arrested: “Through my arrest I made a break and also finally experienced that my fear [of being arrested] is absurd.”¹⁴⁷ She explained how the experience of confronting the police had been transformative in a way that had not been possible through Kommune 1's group therapy sessions. The other Kommunards were enthralled by the prospect that disobedient actions against “external” authority could help them undo the authoritarian character structure they had “internalized.”¹⁴⁸ Kommune 1 soon began organizing an action around the visit of US Vice-President Hubert Humphrey to West Berlin on April 6.¹⁴⁹ Inspired by the Provos who had recently disrupted the wedding of the Dutch princess Beatrix using smoke bombs, Kommune 1 made preparations to bombard Humphrey's motorcade with balloons filled with heavy whipping cream, flour, eggs, and candy.¹⁵⁰

But the Kommunard's plans were never to materialize. By the evening of April 5, they had finished concocting their smoke bombs and balloons. A small group went to test their arsenal in Grūnewald, the woods on the outskirts of West Berlin. Shortly after getting off the S-Bahn at Nikolassee, however, West Berlin police intercepted and arrested all of them.¹⁵¹ At approximately the same time—6:20PM—officers stormed the Kommunards' apartment taking

¹⁴² APO-Archiv, “Justiz I” folder, Yellow Notebook, 14.

¹⁴³ APO-Archiv, Ordner K I, “Justiz I” folder, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Teufel himself went to SDS meetings on behalf of Kommune 1 to help with planning for the protest. See APO-Archiv, “Justiz I” folder, Red Notebook, 7, and Yellow Notebook, 45.

¹⁴⁵ Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 112.

¹⁴⁶ Kunzelman led the charge in making statements like this. For example, see his comments in APO-Archiv, “Justiz I” folder, Yellow Notebook, 46-49 and Red Notebook, 17-18.

¹⁴⁷ APO-Archiv, “Justiz I” folder, Red Notebook, 28-30.

¹⁴⁸ See APO-Archiv, “Justiz I” folder, Yellow Notebook 59-61, and Red Notebook, 35-40.

¹⁴⁹ The Kommunards agreed and preparations for the action began on April 2 when the Kommunards met with select friends from the SDS to discuss the action. As the Kommune notebooks from that day notes, only Rainer Langhans (who had yet to join Kommune 1) agreed to participate. Lōnnendonker, Rabehl, and Stadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:318–324.

¹⁵⁰ Through the US writer Reinhard Lettau, the group learned of that Humphrey would be taking part in a motorcade along Martin-Luther-Strasse. See Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 115.

¹⁵¹ This group included Teufel, Seehuber, Ridder, and Ulrich and Dagrūn Enzensberger. *Ibid.*, 117.

everyone present into custody. Eleven people were arrested in total and sent to the Tempelhof Airport Complex. Only much later did the Kommunards learn that their arrests followed a week-long surveillance operation of their apartment.¹⁵²

The next morning, April 6, 1967, West Germany awoke to shocking news. Police had arrested a radical group of communist students who had devised intricate plans to assassinate Hubert Humphrey.¹⁵³ Headlines in major West German newspapers declared: “Humphrey was to be murdered” and “Assassination Attempt on Humphrey foiled by Police: FU students built bombs with explosives from Peking, Mao’s Embassy in East-Berlin delivered the Bombs against Vice-President Humphrey.”¹⁵⁴ In the US, *The New York Times* reported the foiled assassination attempt on the front page. Just a day later, however, the West German dailies retracted their stories when West Berlin police confirmed that the eleven suspects had not planned to attack Humphrey’s entourage with explosives smuggled from communist China as was originally alleged, but with balloons filled with pudding.¹⁵⁵

The scandal caused by the “Pudding Assassination,” as it came to be called, humiliated state authorities and the media but won fame for Kommune 1. Within hours of being released, Kommune 1 held a highly publicized press conference during which they confirmed they had planned “no aggressive act” against Humphrey, but only wanted to make him look ridiculous.¹⁵⁶ Rather than shirk from the media spotlight, Kommune 1 eagerly embraced it. In addition to giving numerous interviews, they even performed the tactics they had planned to use for a television crew.¹⁵⁷ The failed action propelled the group and its members into stardom as sensationalized stories and photographs detailing their unconventional communal lifestyle adorned newspapers and magazines throughout West Germany. Almost overnight, Kommune 1 became the poster child of the German New Left.

¹⁵² Johnson’s apartment was under surveillance by the US Secret Service who with the permission of German State Security had tapped the phone lines to the apartment. The American and West German governments were suspicious of Johnson’s political activities and had reason to believe he was a Czech secret agent. See Marco Carini, *Fritz Teufel: Wenn’s der Wahrheitsfindung dient* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur, 2003), 39; Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 116.

¹⁵³ The actual press release read that the 11 arrested “[...] had planned an attack on the life or health of the US Vice-President Humphrey with bombs made of unknown chemicals, filled plastic bags, or with other dangerous instruments like stones” in “Gesammelte Werke Gegen Uns,” in the International Institute for Social History (IISH), Amsterdam, “Kommune 1” Archive, File 2.

¹⁵⁴ Nürnberger Nachrichten, April 6, 1967; Berliner Morgenpost, April 6, 1967. In their coverage, the Bild-Zeitung declared: “Conspiracy against the American Vice President Humphrey: The Berlin extremists prepared an attack on the guest of our city with bombs and highly explosive chemicals, with explosive filled plastic—what the terrorists named a ‘Mao-Cocktail’—and stones.” *Bild-Zeitung*, April 6, 1967.

¹⁵⁵ While the group was never legally tried for their attempted action on Humphrey (although they were not officially exonerated until over ten years later on October 30, 1977), each of the student members did receive disciplinary hearings from the university. Within days, the group’s lawyer Horst Mahler filed suit against the chief of police for spreading false information to the press, an administrative appeal that was denied. For copies of the disciplinary letters and charges sent to them, see “Gesammelte Werke Gegen Uns,” in IISH, “Kommune 1” Archive, File 2. See also Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 41.

¹⁵⁶ Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 122.

¹⁵⁷ The video can be viewed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dauV6i5uu_E (last accessed October 17, 2010).

Given the immense media response generated by the Pudding Assassination, scholarly attention to Kommune 1's relation to the media is hardly surprising. Yet the central target of the action was not Humphrey; it was the authoritarian personality the Kommunards believed themselves to have internalized. In discussions leading up to the action, the Kommunards repeatedly couched their reasons for taking action in subjective terms. Hameister, who went on to be a prominent psychoanalyst, declared his desire to "abolish my fear of state authority." And Ulrich Enzensberger made clear that the Humphrey action was not aimed "toward the outside," but was an "inner-directed action."¹⁵⁸ The distinction here between "outside" and "inner" maps onto ongoing debates over the objective and subjective considerations of antiauthoritarian praxis. As I explain below, the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling inverted traditional notions of the relationship between subject and object in political struggle, positing the subject as itself an objective terrain of political intervention.

Left Fascism and/or the Flexible Personality

As the previous sections make clear, antiauthoritarianism was not without its critics. Even among antiauthoritarian activists, there was not consensus on the forms that action and organization should take. These disagreements became especially apparent on May 12, 1967, when the SDS voted to expel every member of Kommune 1.¹⁵⁹ The tipping point came when Kommune 1 circulated a series of satiric fliers at the FU insulting the university administration and threatening to commit arson on campus.¹⁶⁰ At the time, the university administration was entertaining a proposal to ban the SDS in response to its increasingly disruptive political activities.¹⁶¹ The fact that Kommune 1 jokingly signed their fliers "SDS"—"the Serious German Students League"—hardly helped the SDS. The official decision to expel the "Psycho-Kommune," as Kommune 1 was referred to during deliberations, referenced their "existential voluntarism" and "political cynicism."¹⁶² In his explanation of the vote, Wolfgang Lefèvre criticized Kommune 1 for its "theoryless activism" and "fantasy voluntarism." He claimed their "unmediated insistence" on subjectivity stood at distinct odds with the objective aims of the SDS.¹⁶³ Dutschke abstained from voting.

The antiauthoritarian emphasis on the psyche and subjectivity in political action would come under increasing fire after a violent demonstration in West Berlin left one student dead. On June 2, 1967, thousands of demonstrators mobilized to protest the state visit of Reza Pahlavi, the

¹⁵⁸ APO-A, "Justiz I" folder, Red Notebook, 16.

¹⁵⁹ On the expulsion of Kommune 1, see Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:324–329; Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 70–73; Thomas, *Protest movements in 1960s West Germany*, 1103–104; Fichter and Lönnendonker, *Kleine Geschichte des SDS*, 158–159.

¹⁶⁰ The fliers were labeled 1-5 and distributed on May 3. Originals can be found in APO-A, "Kommune 1" folder.

¹⁶¹ Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staadt, *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte*, 1: 1960:–67:174–175.

¹⁶² "Beschluss des Bundesvorstandes des SDS vom 29/30 April 1967," reproduced in Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 73.

¹⁶³ Wolfgang Lefèvre, "Referat zur Begründung des Antrags auf Ausschluß der Kommune I aus dem Berliner SDS" in Lönnendonker and Fichter, *Freie Universität Berlin*, 4:436.

Shah of Iran, to West Berlin. They were met that day by a police force instructed to deal with any “threat to public security and order” using force.¹⁶⁴ The confrontations escalated in the evening when four thousand people gathered outside the German Opera House in West Berlin. Pahlavi was scheduled to see a performance of Mozart’s “The Magic Flute” accompanied by West Berlin’s mayor, Heinrich Albertz, and the West German president Heinrich Lübke. When one hundred members of the Iranian secret service SAVAK arrived at 7:20PM, demonstrators responded by hurling tomatoes, eggs, smoke bombs, and bottles at them. Police quickly intervened, trapping much of the crowd between barricades and a wall lining the street behind them. As officers began forcibly removing demonstrators, some attempted to flee by climbing over the wall behind them. The rest had no choice but to suffer baton strikes from police and be arrested.¹⁶⁵ The ensuing melee lasted until midnight. Hundreds were arrested and dozens injured. In the midst of the tumult, a 26-year-old student named Benno Ohnesorg was killed when a plainclothes police officer, Karl-Heinz Kurras, shot him in the back of the head. It was Ohnesorg’s first demonstration and by all accounts, he had done nothing to provoke the shooting.

Ohnesorg’s death was a watershed moment in the history of the German New Left. Not only did it drive tens of thousands of students to take to the streets throughout West Germany in the weeks that followed, but the shooting also prompted serious questions about the antiauthoritarian insistence on direct action.¹⁶⁶ A week after Ohnesorg’s death, on June 9, the SDS and the Republican Club hosted a conference in Hannover with the theme “The University and Democracy: Conditions and Organization of Resistance.” Over five thousand people attended, making the conference one of the largest nationwide meetings of the student Left in the history of the Federal Republic. Organizers chose the date and site of the conference with Ohnesorg’s funeral in mind—earlier in the day, thousands had flocked to Ohnesorg’s hometown of Hannover to pay their final respects.

The conference featured remarks from prominent students, and the SDS asked several “professors who have recently shown their support for us” to also speak.¹⁶⁷ Among those invited

¹⁶⁴ “1. Beschlußempfehlung des 1. Untersuchungsausschusses des Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, V. Wahlperiode, vom 18. September,” p. 93, Landesarchiv Berlin, Rep 014/1017. See Nick Thomas’ detailed reconstruction of the protests, which includes his analysis of the police planning for the protests. Thomas, *Protest movements in 1960s West Germany*, 107–129. See also Slobodian, *Foreign front*, 101–133. For film of the protests, see the documentary *2 Juni* (1967) directed by Hans Rüdiger Minow and Thomas Giefer and produced by AStA-FU, located in the Deutsche Kinemathek. Kommune 1 had been a main proponent of the protest, and had planned accordingly. Hundreds of activists that day wore paper grocery bags on their heads emblazoned with head shots of the Shah and his wife. The intervention would itself be a travesty of the couple and an uncanny reminder to officers who they were protecting as they beat students. Early in the afternoon on June 2, 3,000 demonstrators gathered outside the West Berlin city hall to protest Pahlavi’s reception by the city’s mayor, Heinrich Albertz. Police were joined by 100 members of the Iranian secret service, SAVAK, who shortly after arriving began attacking demonstrators with thick wooden poles as police looked on.

¹⁶⁵ Conflicting reports of the events at the German Opera House abound. For a report from the time, see “Knüppel Frei,” *Spiegel*, June 12, 1967. See also Knut Nevermann, *Der 2.Juni 1967. Studenten Zwischen Notstand Und Demokratie: Dokumente Zu Den Ereignissen Anlässlich Des Schah-Besuchs* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1967).

¹⁶⁶ Belinda Davis, “New Leftists and West Germany: Fascism, Violence and the Public Sphere, 1967- 1974,” in *Coping with the Nazi past: West German debates on Nazism and generational conflict, 1955-1975*, ed. Philipp Gassert and Alan E Steinweis (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 219–222.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, 617.

was the 37-year-old sociologist Jürgen Habermas, whose work was revered by West German students. As a university student in the mid-1950s, Habermas had been active against West Germany's rearmament. He had since kept close ties to the SDS with whom he shared an ardent desire for radically reforming the West German university system. "Like no one else among the non-student population," Frankfurt School historian Rolf Wiggershaus notes, Habermas seemed best fit to assist the students in their "attempts at self-comprehension and clarification."¹⁶⁸ What Habermas had to say that day, however, did not further endear the students to the young professor; instead his comments shattered their relationship.

Habermas' speech began by affirming his support for the student movement and its efforts to reform the university system. In particular, he lauded students for intervening in West Germany's emaciated public sphere with their protests against the War in Vietnam. "[I]t was the campaign by students," he declared, "in this case those in Berlin, against false definitions of a war that is a struggle for social liberation, that first breached the official world-view of our nation and let information from the other side gradually trickle in."¹⁶⁹ He condemned the mainstream press for defaming student activists, and issued a scathing critique of the deadly policing at the Shah protest, going so far as to label it "terror" reminiscent of "the days of fascism."¹⁷⁰ The murder of Ohnesorg, Habermas pronounced, would be a crucial turning point for the student opposition in West Germany. As such, he felt compelled to elaborate on several "dangers" that now confronted the emerging movement. Chief among these was what he claimed to be a growing tension between theory and praxis.¹⁷¹ Habermas described the students as belonging to the "intellectual" opposition—meant as a subtle reminder that they did not constitute a class, let alone one with revolutionary potential. "If not to redeem" it, the "task" of students was to "declare" the shortcomings of the existing system and of its espoused progressive politics. Students should bring to "consciousness" what is kept from "political consciousness" of citizens. Student protests, he argued, should serve a "compensatory function."¹⁷²

Yet Habermas was troubled by what the increasing inclination of students to "not only interpret the world, but to change it."¹⁷³ The state had clearly demonstrated authoritarian tendencies during the Shah protest, but, Habermas insisted, the political situation in West Germany remained democratic, especially if compared to the nation's not too distant Nazi past. The objective conditions for revolution did not exist, although he believed the chance for profound and radical reform had emerged thanks in large part to the efforts of students. Frustrations over the distance between theory and praxis, he feared, threatened to devolve into

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Jürgen Habermas, "Rede über die politische Rolle der Studentenschaft in der Bundesrepublik," in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 2, Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 246. See the collected documents from the congress in Uwe Bergmann, *Bedingungen Und Organisation Des Widerstandes: Der Kongreß in Hannover* (Frankfurt am Main: Voltaire, 1967).

¹⁷⁰ Habermas, "Rede über die politische Rolle der Studentenschaft in der Bundesrepublik," 246.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 248.

¹⁷² Ibid., 247.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

“actionism,” a type of praxis that “seizes each occasion to mobilize for the sake of mobilization, and not for the reasonably and tactically promising achievement of defined goals.” Habermas urged students to limit their future actions to “demonstrative force.” Protest should only be used “compel attention” to their arguments.¹⁷⁴ According to Habermas, demonstrations should be opportunities for students to make their case publicly, not to make “manifest” the “sublime violence” bound up in liberal institutions. To not limit their opposition to staged forms of reasoned argumentation, Habermas claimed, would not only jeopardize the possibility for radical reforms, but it would also be “masochistic.”¹⁷⁵ It would mean “playing a game with terror that has fascistic implications.”¹⁷⁶

Among the responses to Habermas that day, none would be more impassioned than Rudi Dutschke’s vehement contention that the emerging movement not limit its action strategy to the dramatization of arguments. He argued that the structures Habermas defended as reformable would not permit the fundamental changes demanded by students. “[I]t has become clear that the established playing rules of this irrational democracy are not our rules,” Dutschke declared, “the starting point for politicizing the student-body must be the conscious breaking-through of these established playing rules.”¹⁷⁷ Dutschke pointed to Third World liberation struggles to refute Habermas’ assertion that revolutionary conditions were not at hand. What advanced industrial society lacked was revolutionary will. In response to Habermas’ allusion to Marx’s eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, Dutschke fired back, accusing Habermas of a blind objectivism that hypostatized the present:

For Professor Habermas, it can still be as Marx said: it is insufficient for the idea to strive for reality; reality must also strive for the concept. This was correct in the age of transitional capitalism. But today this no longer makes sense. The material conditions of possibility for making history are given. Developments in the forces of production have reached a point in which the abolition of hunger, war, and domination has become materially possible. Everything now depends on the conscious human will to finally become conscious of the history it has always made, to control, and to command it. That means, Professor Habermas, your concept-free objectivism is crushing the subject of emancipation.¹⁷⁸

Dutschke concluded by affirming the necessity for students to not restrict their struggle to theatrical displays of dissent. To rousing applause, he urged those in attendance to advance the struggle beyond the universities.¹⁷⁹

Unsettled by the resounding approbation Dutschke received, Habermas replied with a rashly articulated accusation. He claimed Dutschke was asking students, “armed only with

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 249.

¹⁷⁵ Jürgen Habermas, “Ja, nicht nur zu einer Richtigstellung, sondern zu einer vorläufigen Antwort auf meine beiden Frankfurter Kommilitonen,” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 2, Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 250.

¹⁷⁶ Habermas, “Rede über die politische Rolle der Studentenschaft in der Bundesrepublik,” 249.

¹⁷⁷ Rudi Dutschke, “Professor Habermas, Ihr begriffloser Objektivismus erschlägt das zu emanzipierende Subjekt,” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 2, Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 252.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 251.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 253.

tomatoes in their hands,” to intentionally risk injury or even death to bring out the “sublime violence that is necessarily implied in institutions.” He even went so far as to blame Ohnesorg’s death on the “provocating student hordes,” and declared that in a non-revolutionary situation, provocation was nothing but “subjective insolence.”¹⁸⁰ By the time Habermas took the podium, however, it was past midnight. Dutschke and over half the conference attendees had already left. Habermas himself had earlier gone to his car but decided to return to reiterate his earlier words of caution:

Why did [Dutschke] spend three quarters of an hour developing a voluntarist ideology, which in 1848 had been named utopian socialism and which under today’s conditions—I believe in any case I have reasons to use this terminology—has to be called left fascism.¹⁸¹ Since his comments came so late in the night, Habermas’ point, which he had hoped would compel critical self-reflection among students, was not discussed at all. As Wiggershaus has noted, “A harshly formulated accusation was therefore left to stand, and its very harshness condemned Habermas himself in the eyes of the most active students.”¹⁸²

To associate the antiauthoritarian German New Left with fascism was certain to spark controversy. Habermas’ accusation hinged on an evaluation that the means preferred by antiauthoritarian activists lacked consistent and rational objective ends. For Habermas, the immense complexity and all-encompassing administrative character of the present social “system” meant that “immediate interventions” or, what was “once called direct action,” had little chance to directly impact West German institutions.¹⁸³ He intended his comments to be a clearheaded reminder of the formidable defenses advanced industrial society had at its disposal, a check on those who would seek to confront the “system” head on. But Habermas risked underestimating a central premise of West German antiauthoritarianism. Activists did want to endow their actions with immediacy, but not for the ends articulated by Habermas. Their immediate aim was not the transformation of structures and institutions of authority. As this chapter has tracked, the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling prized direct action as a transformative experience targeting first and foremost one’s psyche and character. This hardly meant that antiauthoritarians did not aspire to the “long march through the institutions,” a phrase Dutschke famously repeated through the late 1960s. But political structures and institutions did not constitute the entire horizon of antiauthoritarian struggle. Antiauthoritarian activists believed that subjectivity itself—particularly one’s psyche and character—had become a necessary objective terrain of struggle.

¹⁸⁰ Habermas, “Meine Damen und Herren, ich hoffe, daß Herr Dutschke noch hier ist...,” 254.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, 618. Dutschke heard the criticism made against him on tape the following morning. In his journal, he wrote that Habermas had reduced his entire position to a recommendation that provocative actions be used to make “manifest sublime violence” in order to “consciously send students ‘to the slaughter.’” Rudi Dutschke, “Um 6 Uhr vom Hannover-Kongreß übermüdet zurückgekehrt,” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 2, Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 255.

¹⁸³ Habermas, “Rede über die politische Rolle der Studentenschaft in der Bundesrepublik,” 248.

Habermas was hardly alone in his critiques of performative antiauthoritarianism. Most notably, he was joined by his former teacher, Theodor Adorno, whose theory of the authoritarian personality had been formative for the New Left. After a brief period of measured support, however, Adorno publicly dismissed the West German student movement for embracing a “bourgeois instrumentalism that fetishizes means because its form of praxis cannot suffer reflection upon its ends.” Their “actionism,” he argued, was traceable to a “despair” rooted in an unconscious recognition of their powerlessness to change society.¹⁸⁴ Similar charges against the German New Left continue to echo among scholars today. Following Habermas, Hans Kundnani, for example, has recently argued that the German New Left was guided by a “provocation thesis”: by provoking the state to make manifest its latent violence, activists believed (according to Kundnani) they could awaken revolutionary consciousness in the masses.¹⁸⁵ While the German New Left certainly prized provocation, Kundnani’s interpretation reduces the movement to a liberal belief in the power of persuasion; that is, if the population could only witness the violence that undergirds the state they would rise up against it. Consciousness-raising was an important project for the German New Left, but as we have seen, activists also aimed at more “direct” effects. Just as Kundnani carries on Habermas’ position, Russell Bermann continues to champion Adorno’s critique of the German New Left:

The student movement [in West Germany] was increasingly driven by voluntarism—the will, not reason, sets the pace—as well as by an indifference to, if not an outright enthusiasm for, many illiberal regimes, and a performative imperative, regardless of ethical contents: the priority of practice over thought.¹⁸⁶

In broad strokes, Bermann accuses the German New Left of lacking reason and ethics in both its forms of engagement and the causes it championed. The “performative imperative” he attributes to students ostensibly indexes an uncompromising desire for immediacy in which rationality took a backseat to unbridled adventurism. According to Bermann, the New Left’s felt obligation to act for the sake of acting left little room for ethical considerations, something that Bermann—like Kundnani—connects to a latent anti-semitism in the German New Left. Bermann bases his critique on a belief that activist attempts to “change society” were “predestined to fail.” In doing so, he projects onto the New Left a desire to transform objective conditions, but ignores their focus on the subjective effects of political action.

In rehearsing these critiques of performative antiauthoritarianism, I am not looking to refute them necessarily. I do believe that critics have avoided substantive analysis of the antiauthoritarian emphasis on subjectivity as an objective terrain of intervention. My aim here is to posit a different vantage point from which to critically examine the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. I am interested specifically in what antiauthoritarianism can reveal about the changing

¹⁸⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, “Keine Angst Vor Dem Elfenbeinturm: Spiegel-Gespräch Mit Dem Frankfurter Sozialphilosophen Professor Theodor W. Adorno,” *Spiegel*, May 5, 1969, 206.

¹⁸⁵ Hans Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz? Germany’s 1968 Generation and the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 39.

¹⁸⁶ Russell A. Bermann, “From ‘Left-Fascism’ to Campus Anti-Semitism: Radicalism as Reaction,” *Democratija*, no. 13 (Summer 2008): 18.

character of social domination in the postwar period. Instead of scrutinizing how the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling threatened to replicate forms of exploitation that preceded it (ie. fascism), how might we understand it as anticipating forms of social domination that came after it? What does the New Left's concern with the authoritarian personality teach us about the emergence of new types of character structures that followed from the financial and political crises of the late 1960s, such as what Brian Holmes has termed the "flexible personality"?

Holmes' theory takes its cue from the Frankfurt School's project of identifying an "ideal type" of character structure that can explain the psychic operation of social domination today. Holmes looks to update the "ideal type" posited by the Frankfurt School—the authoritarian personality—to reflect our flexible system of accumulation of the present. According to Holmes, the flexible personality is subjectivity "modeled and channeled by contemporary capitalism."¹⁸⁷ It reflects a "contemporary form of governmentality, an internalized and culturalized pattern of 'soft' coercion."¹⁸⁸ Just as the new flexible conditions of late capitalism emerged out of the crises the capitalist system faced in the postwar period, so too, according to Holmes, did the "flexible personality" derive from attacks in the 1960s on the values and behaviors entailed in the authoritarian personality. While the flexible personality may be a consequence of the trenchant challenge presented to capitalist accumulation in the 1960s, Holmes does not conflate this new ideal type with the New Left. The flexible personality, he argues, is a "distorted form" of the "revolt against authoritarianism and standardization: a set of practices and techniques" for repurposing "the revolutionary energies" of the 1960s.¹⁸⁹ Likewise, I am not looking to reduce the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling to the psychic habitus of flexible accumulation. My point is considerably more modest, targeting as it does not the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, but the critical perspective often used to examine its historical legacy. In addition to examining what the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling inherited from the Third Reich, how might we also interrogate what we ourselves have inherited from it?

¹⁸⁷ Brian Holmes, "The Flexible Personality: For a New Cultural Critique," *Transform* (2002): 10, <http://eicpc.net/transversal/1106/holmes/en>.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

CHAPTER THREE

Trying the Courts: Performative Antiauthoritarianism and the Criminalization of Dissent

“We too have FEAR when we must appear before the court. That’s why we prepare ourselves with others, because we know we aren’t defenseless. But if you just stand there, then one can sense it. But it goes by if you see a comic fuss.”

–Kommune 1

As the antiauthoritarian insistence on direct action and illegality gained currency within the German New Left, activists increasingly became the targets of repression. This took a variety of forms, from protest bans and prosecutions to mass arrests and even deadly instances of policing. The criminalization of dissent in late 1960s West Germany also operated in more discursive but no less consequential ways, primarily through the vilification of activists in the pages of popular newspapers and magazines owned by the notoriously conservative Springer Verlag publishing empire. In this chapter, I examine the consequences that criminalization held for the emerging antiauthoritarian structure of feeling. My analysis focuses specifically on the challenges it presented to the antiauthoritarian emphasis on disobedient performance in confrontation with authority as a potentially liberating experience. But rather than understand criminalization as having undercut performative antiauthoritarianism, how can we examine repression as constitutive of the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling, conditioning not only the practices of activists but their psychic lives as well? What did criminalization reveal about the inconsistencies and possibilities of performative antiauthoritarianism, about the changing configurations of power and authority in West Germany following the collapse of the postwar *Wirtschaftswunder*?

A watershed moment in the criminalization of dissent in West Germany was also the decisive event in the German New Left’s emergence: June 2, 1967, the day the West Berlin police officer Karl-Heinz Kurras shot and killed the 26-year-old student Benno Ohnesorg during a tumultuous protest against the state visit of the Shah of Iran.¹ In the wake of the murder, the West Berlin Senate took the exceptional measure of banning all political demonstrations in the city—a direct violation of the West German constitution at the time.² At a press conference on June 3, Mayor Heinrich Albertz defended the ban as necessary “to fully fight the criminality” that threatens “security and order in our city.” Whoever dared defy the ban, Albertz assured,

¹ For details of this protest, see Chapter Two of this dissertation. See also Uwe Soukup, *Wie starb Benno Ohnesorg?: der 2. Juni 1967* (Berlin: Verlag 1900, 2007).

² Justizsenator Hans-Günter Hoppe would later claim that no such “ban” was ever issued, instead explaining that the Berlin Senate had decided to closely carefully review any application for a demonstration related to the events of June 2. See the explanation in “Studenten Dürfen Heute Demonstrieren,” *Die Welt*, June 13, 1967.

would feel the full brunt of a “vigorous police deployment.”³ Newspapers owned by newspaper mogul Axel Springer like the *Berliner Morgenpost* praised the exceptional measure as a sign that West Berlin will not “let itself be terrorized” by the “FU-Chinesen,” a reference to the espoused Maoist sympathies of many students at the Free University.⁴ Many activists and their supporters viewed the ban as less a response to the events of June 2 than an extension of them. Taken together with the criminalizing discourse propounded by city politicians, the police union, and the press, the ban seemed an attempt to literally dictate their behaviors and practices.⁵ Activists claimed the injunction discursively depoliticized demonstrators by transposing them from a political to a criminal frame, a process that presented demonstrations as worthy of forceful repression. In the days that followed, left-leaning professors, students, and artists throughout the country denounced the ban.⁶

Faced with mounting public pressure, the West Berlin Senate finally permitted a student-organized demonstration on June 13, but only with several provisos. As Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Busch explained to *Die Welt*, the city was again granting permission for demonstrations, but not “all types of demonstrations.” The West Berlin government issued a permit directly to the student council of the Free University Berlin (AStA-FU) for a three-hour march and rally. To ensure the demonstration was “led in peace and order” the city government required organizers to assign one rally marshal to every fifty demonstrators. The marshal was to register with the authorities ahead of time and be identifiable by an armband. Even strict rules on the messages of posters were levied. For example, activists could call for the resignation of Albrecht, but anything that equated him with a murderer was strictly forbidden. Additionally, all banners had to be approved by city officials ahead of time, a requirement many took to be an explicit attempt at regulating the discourse of the demonstration.⁷

Organizers publicly described the conditions for lifting the ban as “idiotic and discriminatory,” an “outrageous provocation.”⁸ A flier circulated by organizers before the demonstration gave insight into their concerns. It asked, “What does the Berlin Senate want to use us to demonstrate today?”⁹ The demonstration, organizers feared, would not be an opportunity for activists to protest the murderous police repression of two weeks earlier; rather

³ See the transcript in “DOKUMENTE des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach” (compiled by AStA FU), Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 70. The commentary was also reproduced in “FU-Student Wurde Durch Schuß Eines Kriminalbeamten Tödlich Verletzt,” *Tagesspiegel*, June 4, 1967.

⁴ “Heinrich Albrecht Bleibt Hart,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, June 4, 1967.

⁵ For statements by different parties see, “Der Senat: Alle Demonstrationen Sind Vorläufig Untersagt,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, June 4, 1967. The declaration by the police union can be found in “DOKUMENTE des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach” (compiled by AStA FU), Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 70.

⁶ See the signed public letter “Wer erschoss Bannion Ohnesorg” which appeared in a special issue of the *Abendzeitung* on 7.juni 1967 reproduced in “DOKUMENTE des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach” (compiled by AStA FU), Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III.

⁷ “Studenten Dürfen Heute Demonstrieren.”

⁸ “Mehr Ordner Als Demonstranten,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, June 14, 1967.

⁹ See the flier, “Was will der Berliner Senat heute duch uns demonstrieren?” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 46.

the conditions made the protest a chance for the city government to demonstrate their tolerance of, and ability to regulate dissent. By attaching such provisions to the demonstration, the flier claimed that the city government sought to create the façade that “democratic conditions reign in Berlin.” Organizers argued that any turbulence during the protest would be presented as evidence that the “unpleasant occurrences” of June 2 were the fault of demonstrators. On top of all this, the day of the protest, the city government issued repeated warnings over the radio and in the press imploring citizens to avoid the march route. Activists insisted this worked as both a reminder of the city’s tolerance as well as an attempt to further isolate students. As one flier asserted, the warnings suggested to citizens what a “considerable inconvenience” it was to “grant democratic rights to a minority.”¹⁰

Despite their frustrations, six thousand demonstrators gathered at Hammerskjold Platz on June 13 for what was certainly the most orderly demonstration in the history of the German New Left. Those who participated did not just fulfill the conditions placed on the demonstration, they “over-fulfilled” them.¹¹ At the suggestion of Wolfgang Schwiedzrik, a theater student in West Berlin who would soon become a notable director, organizers staged a march that put on display “the type of democracy the Berlin Senate permits,” to quote one flier advertising the action.¹² Instead of assigning one marshal to every fifty demonstrators like the city required, fifty marshals were assigned to single demonstrators. The demonstrator carried an oversized picket sign that read “Demonstrant” (demonstrator) and walked behind the group of marshals arranged into five neat rows of ten accompanied by a large banner that identified them as the “Ordner” (marshal). The visual display of six thousand students walking in ordered groups and lines was striking. Only adding to the demonstration’s theatricality were six members of Kommune 1 who led the entire march. They were dressed in penitent’s gowns and carried a sign that declared, “Radikalinskis aller Länder tut Buße!” (Radical Lefties of the World Repent!). Their chants avowed penitence for the crimes the city and press had accused them of committing. “We don’t want to burn down any more department stores,” they exclaimed, “We don’t want to stab any more police officers.”¹³ The next day, the typically hostile media in West Berlin called the action an “unmistakable ridicule” and a “student prank.”¹⁴

Instead of refusing the conditions of the demonstration, activists literally changed the script drawn up by the West Berlin Senate. In doing so, they refunctioned the demonstration for their own ends. Their overly civil obedience undermined the city’s superficial tolerance for

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Dorothea Kraus, *Theater-Proteste zur Politisierung von Strasse und Bühne in den 1960er Jahren* (Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 2007), 176.

¹² “Was will der Berliner Senat heute durch uns demonstrieren?” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 46. Ulrich Enzensberger credits Schwiedzrik with the idea for the demonstration. See Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I* (München: Goldmann, 2006), 167. Schwiedzrik’s career as a theater director will be discussed in Chapter Five. For Schwiedzrik’s reflection on the action, see Wolfgang Schwiedzrik, “Theater als Aktion,” in *1968: vom Ereignis zum Mythos*, ed. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 297–316.

¹³ Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 167–168.

¹⁴ “Mit Zahlreichen Insignien Unübersehbaren Spotts,” *Die Welt*, June 14, 1967. “Studententdemonstration Verlieft Diszipliniert,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, June 14, 1967.

dissent by making tangible the strict bureaucratic limits placed on protest in the Federal Republic of Germany. Images of highly disciplined and orderly demonstrators carried an added visual effect: it bore striking resemblance to the carefully choreographed fascist spectacles staged in the very same West Berlin streets by the Third Reich just two decades earlier. And the decision to single out particular demonstrators conjured memories of Nazi's parading "degenerates" and Jews through the streets of German cities. That this was the "type of democracy the Berlin Senate permits" dramatized student accusations of the continuity between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic.¹⁵

In addition to having demonstrative force, the *Ordner Demonstration*, as it came to be called, was also an example of performative antiauthoritarianism. It aimed to unsettle the subjectifying aspirations of criminalization. The criminalization of dissent, as I have argued elsewhere, is a process of subject formation that combines discursive and material forms of repression in the attempt to ensure the proper comportment of dissenting groups and individuals.¹⁶ It is the moment of liberal governance in which the authority of the state appears in its closest proximity to the power it wields over its citizens. Unlike other operations of the liberal state, which depend on at least the appearance of consent from willing individuals, criminalization is premised on constraining and shaping the behaviors of subjects through coercion. The repression of June 2, the subsequent conditions that accompanied the permission to protest, and the discourse of criminality propounded by Albertz and the press comprised just such a process of criminalization. It seemed to leave New Left activists with little agential capacity. Thus the remarkable upshot of the *Ordner Demonstration*. Instead of attempting to refuse their criminal subjectivity—which would have promised further confrontations with the very real powers of the state—participants found a way to actively embrace it. Although the *Ordner Demonstration* certainly differed from the June 2 protests, both demonstrations undermined prevailing forms of authority and the authoritarian personality. Whereas the actions of activists on June 2 were defined by literal confrontation with the powers of the state, the behaviors of participants in the *Ordner Demonstration* operated in a more immanent relationship to authority. Activists in the later event obediently submitted themselves to criminalization in an effort to exceed their criminalization. By overly consenting to the coercive process of criminalization, they effected a striking reversal: rather than forego their agency to the powers of the state, they uncovered alternative agential capacities.

The *Ordner Demonstration* seems to complicate the seemingly antithetical relation between subjection and agency, which Judith Butler helpfully summarizes:

How can it be that the subject, taken to be the condition for and instrument of agency, is at the same time the effect of subordination, understood as the deprivation of agency? If

¹⁵ Was will der Berliner Senat heute durch uns demonstrieren?" Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. "Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967," Document 46.

¹⁶ Michael Shane Boyle, "The Criminalization of Dissent: Protest Violence, Activist Performance, and the Curious Case of the VolxTheaterKarawane in Genoa," *TDR: The Drama Review* 55, no. 4 (2011): 113–127.

subordination is the condition of possibility for agency, how might agency be thought in opposition to the forces of subordination?¹⁷

Butler's model draws on a Foucauldian modality of power to move beyond questions of domination and subordination. Butler suggests that power must be approached as producing the subject and the very condition of possibility for agency. Yet contrary to sovereign scenes of interpellation envisioned by the likes of Louis Althusser, subjection entails not only "a power exerted on a subject" but also "a power assumed by the subject."¹⁸ In other words, the power that subordinates and brings the subject into being should not be conflated with the power assumed by the subject following interpellation. For Butler, there exists a temporal gap between the scene of subjection and the subject's assumption of power. This shift of power holds crucial consequences for the relation of power and agency, since power, according to Butler, begins "as a condition of agency" before constituting "the subject's 'own' agency."¹⁹ Butler suggests that the subject's agency consists of an "act of appropriation" which "may involve an alteration of power such that the power assumed or appropriated works against the power that made that assumption possible."²⁰ The persistence of the conditions of power depends on their reiteration by the subject. Such repetition, Butler notably claims, "is never merely mechanical." It is necessarily "active and productive" and thus open to alteration and slippage. This leads Butler to argue: "Agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled." Yet there still remains what Butler terms the "predicament" of subjection, "how to take an oppositional relation to power that is, admittedly, implicated in the very power one opposes." Butler describes this as the "ambivalent scene of agency."²¹

How did the *Ordner Demonstration* make use of the ambivalence of subjectification, and what does this suggest about repression as being constitutive of performative antiauthoritarianism? If, as discussed in Chapters One and Two, the antiauthoritarian structure of feeling hinged on what Rudi Dutschke called the "collective resolve to fight against the fetishized game rules of formal democracy," then the criminalization of dissent would seem to present nearly insurmountable challenges to performative antiauthoritarianism. After all, performative antiauthoritarianism depended on, as its very condition of possibility, exploiting the very gap that exists between power and authority in liberal governance. It is this gap—the fact that the state depends on legitimacy to maintain its power—not to mention the privileged status of antiauthoritarians as citizens afforded with civil rights, that allowed for disobedient actions to be performed without always incurring the full repression of the state. But as discussed above, criminalization is defined by an extraordinary narrowing of the gap between power and authority. How then were antiauthoritarian activists to react to commands of submission when they had little option but to submit? As the *Ordner Demonstration* illustrated, they did so by turning this question on its head. The predicament became not whether to submit, but rather *how*

¹⁷ Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15–17.

to submit to authority. Participants in the *Ordnung Demonstration* did not break the rules, they devised ways to obey them in an excessively civil manner. In other scenes of criminalization like courtrooms and prisons where power and authority rested in even closer proximity, however, such over-obedience was in fact the enforced mode of comportment. This meant the strategy activists employed in these cases turned into a questioning of the rules, even—and especially—if such questioning was certain to bring about heightened punishment. The point became not to escape punishment or expand one’s ability to act outside of domination, but to mobilize the agency of others.

The constitutive character of criminalization for performative antiauthoritarianism compels us to expand the ways we talk about the international New Left more generally. For example, practices that knowingly incurred punishment and extended terms of imprisonment cannot necessarily be couched within the “metaphysics of desire and liberation” that Kristin Ross has argued is characteristic of much historiography of the New Left.²² Moreover, the collective character of the practices described here disrupt histories of the New Left that defang collective revolt by reducing movements to what Ross calls “the existential anguish of individual destiny.”²³ This is not to dismiss the need for interrogating the New Left rhetoric of liberation and individualism, but it should push us to also pursue alternative paths of analysis. For example, how might the practices examined here upset what Saba Mahmood describes as the “normative liberal assumptions” that take agency to be “a synonym for resistance to relations of domination?”²⁴ As a constitutive feature of performative antiauthoritarianism, how did repression become a necessary occasion for the German New Left to devise alternative forms of struggle? The *Ordnung Demonstration* suggests that activists facing criminalization often turned to highly theatricalized modes of operating in order to exploit the narrow gap between power and authority. What did these new action forms reveal about the growing importance of performance and dramaturgy for activism in a society that was becoming increasingly mediatized? And finally, how might the extreme effort antiauthoritarian activists devoted to undermining the authority of the West German legal system have contributed to a reconfiguration of authority and power, instead of challenging the system’s very legitimacy? Can we consider such a realignment as anticipating the “split” between power and authority that Richard Sennett has identified as a hallmark of governance under neoliberalism—wherein the power to alter fundamental structures does not rest in the hands of the authorities that individuals elect to govern them, but is owned by other entities?²⁵

²² Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 12.

²³ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁴ Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5; 18.

²⁵ Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 181. See also Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character* (New York; London: Norton & company, 1999).

Criminalization and the Natural Right to Resist

In the aftermath of the June 2 protests, a flurry of news stories and statements from government officials worked to paint the demonstrators as criminals. Throughout West Germany, but especially in West Berlin, the yellow press issued sensational reports blaming students for the violence of June 2 and disparaging them as “Störenfrieder” (troublemakers) and “Unruhestifter” (agitators).²⁶ *BZ*, for example, declared that the protests had “nothing to do with politics.” The daily newspaper described what transpired in front of the German Opera as “criminal.”²⁷ Many newspapers reported Kurras had acted in “self-defense,” some going so far as to claim that he was injured in the melee by knife-wielding protestors.²⁸ Most media outlets defended the actions of police, with *BZ* declaring simply, “Whoever produces terror, has to accept the consequences.”²⁹ Still others blamed Ohnesorg’s death on his fellow protestors, calling him “the victim of riots staged by political hooligans.”³⁰ In what became an oft-used comparison of student activists to Nazis and Stalinists, *Bild* alluded to the demonstrators as “rote SA” (red storm troopers) deserving of no “compromise” or “democratic tolerance.”³¹ The West Berlin mayor Heinrich Albertz echoed these sentiments by chastising demonstrators for “insulting and offending a guest of the Federal Republic of Germany” and causing Ohnesorg’s death. “I say explicitly and emphatically that I approve of the police’s behavior,” he asserted to the press on June 3.³²

The one-sided reactions of politicians and the media to Ohnesorg’s murder outraged activists and their supporters who claimed the events were illustrative of the authoritarian tendencies within the West German state and police. The events catapulted the New Left into the center of politics on university campuses across the country and at least 100,000 people attended protests and memorial services for Ohnesorg throughout West and even East Germany.³³ Instead of attending classes, students took part in planning meetings and political workshops. Activists in West Berlin led an extensive campaign to share their side of the story about what happened with citizens; they hosted public discussions, spoke with pedestrians on the street, and distributed close to 100,000 fliers.³⁴ The day after the June 2 protests, four thousand students participated in

²⁶ “Straßenschlacht,” *BZ*, June 3, 1967.

²⁷ “Das Ist Terror,” *BZ*, June 3, 1967.

²⁸ See “Erst Fußtritte—dann Zogen Sie Die Messer,” *Die Welt Am Sonntag*, June 4, 1967. For an example from a non-Springer newspaper, see “FU-Student Wurde Durch Schuß Eines Kriminalbeamten Tödlich Verlezt.”

²⁹ “Das Ist Terror.”

³⁰ “Blutige Krawalle: 1 Toter!,” *Bild*, June 3, 1967.

³¹ “Demonstrieren JA! Randalieren NEIN,” *Bild*, June 3, 1967.

³² “Albertz: Doppelte Drohung,” *Spiegel*, June 19, 1967, 41.

³³ “Berlin/Studenten: Nein, Nein, Nein,” *Spiegel*, June 5, 1967, 59. Nick Thomas argues, “In light of the estimates of attendance for individual demonstrations a figure of perhaps twice this may be more realistic.” Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2003), 114.

³⁴ See “Studenten Werben Auf Die Straße,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, June 11, 1967; “Studenten drohen—Wir Schießen Zurück,” *Bild*, June 5, 1967; “Schweigemärschen Für Den Erschossenen Studenten,” *Hamburger Abendblatt*, June 6, 1967. See the fliers collected in Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,”

a general assembly at the Free University where they called for the resignations of Albertz, the chief of police, and the interior minister, as well as the “defascistization” of the West Berlin police.³⁵ After June 2, characterizations of the fascist behavior of the West Berlin police and city government were widespread. The SDS issued a statement that posited June 2 as the Federal Republic’s turning point from a “postfascist system” to a “prefascist” one.³⁶ Even considerably more clearheaded figures like Theodor Adorno referenced the Holocaust to describe the events. At the start of a lecture on June 6, he famously declared that the student opposition had taken on the position of the Jews.³⁷

Ubiquitous posters and fliers pinned up throughout West Berlin and other major cities characterized Ohnesorg’s death as “political murder” or, more conspiratorially, “planned murder” arranged by the Senate and police in a “rehearsal of the State of Emergency.”³⁸ The young Frankfurt School professor Oskar Negt offered arguably the most careful analysis of Ohnesorg’s death, which he delivered to eight thousand people at a memorial service in Frankfurt am Main on June 8. Negt affirmed that June 2 was a symptom of West Germany’s “opposition-less, authoritarian meritocracy,” but disputed claims that Ohnesorg’s death was “political murder”—at least in the “traditional sense” of Rosa Luxemborg or Karl Liebknecht, the leaders of the Spartacus League who had been murdered by the Freikorps in 1919 as “representatives of political movements.”³⁹ The previously unpolitical Ohnesorg, by contrast, was “the victim of a murderous attack” (Mordanschlag). For Negt, Ohnesorg’s death was nevertheless telling and consequential. The very fact that a student could be murdered at a demonstration, he argued, “is not so much a moral problem, but much more a political state of affairs.” June 2 was evidence that West Germany had entered the “beginning stages” of a “planned dismantling of liberalism” characterized chiefly by the creation of “authoritarian legal instruments” that bypassed and threatened democratic institutions. The statements of police, politicians, and the press signaled the start of a process whereby students would be “stamped” as “potential criminals.” He described this as the “reevaluation of oppositional behaviors into criminal ones.” A national congress of students held in Hannover the day of Ohnesorg’s funeral

³⁵ “Senat Verbieten Demonstrationen; Kripo Erschoß Student in Notwehr,” *Welt Am Sonntag*, June 4, 1967, 23 edition.

³⁶ “Niederlage oder Erfolg der Protestaktion: Erklärung des SDS,” in “DOKUMENTE des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach” compiled by AStA FU, Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 70.

³⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, “Es ist mir nicht möglich, die Vorlesung heute zu beginnen....,” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail: 1946-1995. 2, Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 241.

³⁸ See the fliers: “Benno Ohnesorg” by the Humanistische Union, Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 97; “Geplanter Mord!” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 98.

³⁹ The speech was published as Oskar Negt, “Benno Ohnesorg Ist Das Opfer Eines Mordanschlags,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, June 12, 1967.

averred that the consequences of criminalization were more than discursive; they threatened the “physical destruction” of activists.⁴⁰

Here it should be noted that recent research has uncovered several disturbing details about the events of June 2. In May 2009, declassified government documents revealed that Kurras had been an East German spy and member of the Communist Party at the time of the shooting. More shocking revelations emerged in January 2012 when federal prosecutors unearthed film footage confirming Kurras had not acted in self-defense. The footage presents him calmly walking up to Ohnesorg from behind before shooting him in the head. Newly released photographs show Kurras’ superior and other officers looking on. Arguably the clearest evidence of a cover-up are the grisly details that doctors were ordered to sew up Ohnesorg’s wound and attribute the cause of death on his death certificate as: “Skull injury through blunt force.”⁴¹ This is all to say that student speculation of what transpired were closer to the reality than scholars have long considered to be the case.

The figure who did the most to shape New Left perspectives on the criminalization of dissent was Herbert Marcuse. Barely a month after Ohnesorg’s murder, Marcuse traveled to West Berlin from San Diego to deliver a series of now-celebrated lectures at the FU.⁴² He addressed several issues pertinent to activists, but the high point of his visit was a talk he delivered on July 11 titled “The Problem of Violence and the Radical Opposition.” Before an overflowing auditorium of over three thousand students, Marcuse expounded on his theory of the “natural right of resistance” first developed in his 1965 essay “Repressive Tolerance.” In the earlier work, Marcuse defended the legitimacy of “repressed and overpowered minorities to use extralegal means if the legal ones proved to be inadequate” to compel social change.⁴³ He based his position on a trenchant critique of positive law, its judicial institutions, and the ruling interests they served. Antiauthoritarian activists took to heart Marcuse’s claim that law and order are “always and everywhere the law and order which protect the established hierarchy,” and thus should not be relied on to serve the interests of the opposition.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ “Schlußkommunique des Studentekongresses in Hannover, 9.6.67,” in “DOKUMENTE des 2. Juni 1967 und der Zeit danach” compiled by AStA FU, “Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2.Juni 1967,” Document 70.

⁴¹ See “New Probe into 1967 Killing: Police Covered Up Truth Behind Infamous Student Shooting,” *Spiegel*, January 23, 2012.

⁴² See the flier advertising the event, “Herbert Marcuse:Moral und Politik in der Überflußgesellschaft,” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Box 317, Folder III. “Vietnam Kundgebungen und Demonstrationen,” Document 119. See the media coverage in “Macht Des Negativen,” *Spiegel*, July 17, 1967. For Bernd Rabehl’s account of the visit, see Bernd Rabehl, “Die Provokationselite,” in *Die Antiautoritäre Revolte: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund Nach Der Trennung Von Der SPD*, ed. Siegward Lönnendonker, Bernd Rabehl, and Jochen Stadt, vol. 1: 1960–67 (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 478–481.

⁴³ Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance,” in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 116.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

While “Repressive Tolerance” focused on what “the natural right of resistance” meant for Third World liberation struggles and minority populations living in the inner cities of the United States, “The Problem of Violence and the Radical Opposition” spoke directly to West German students. Marcuse averred that the right to resist referred to a “higher law, which goes beyond the self-defined right and privilege of a particular group.”⁴⁵ In response to a question from Rudi Dutschke, Marcuse asserted the “close connection” between the right of resistance and natural law, declaring unequivocally:

Now you will say that such a universal higher law simply does not exist. I believe that it does exist. Today we no longer call it natural law, but I believe that if we say today that what justifies us in resisting the system is more than the relative interest of a specific group and more than something that we ourselves have defined, we can demonstrate this. If we appeal to humanity’s right to peace, to humanity’s right to abolish exploitation and oppression, we are not talking about self-defined, special, group interests, but rather and in fact interests demonstrable as universal rights. That is why we can and should lay claim today to the right of resistance as more than a relative right.⁴⁶

Marcuse’s universalist assumptions aside, his clarification that the right of resistance was not reserved for groups of a particular class status or nationality was warmly received by the audience of mostly middle-class university students. Particularly galvanizing for them was his claim that resistance was not just a right; in the face of an oppressive system, Marcuse insisted that breaking laws that supported repression and exploitation was “a duty.”⁴⁷

Despite Marcuse’s materialist sensibilities, his argument risked naturalizing resistance while obscuring the historical conditions that would determine its use and the form it should take. This allowed Marcuse’s argument to be misread repeatedly throughout the late 1960s and 1970s by armed insurrectionist groups who invoked their own natural right of resistance to legitimate the rashest of actions. Marcuse himself came under regular fire from critics who accused him of justifying terrorism and other “violent” forms of resistance.⁴⁸

Though Marcuse repeatedly championed civil disobedience, nowhere in his writings or lectures did he prescribe particular forms that resistance should take. For Marcuse, resistance was a general conceptual category for describing legitimate forms of action that were defined through their categorization as illegitimate by particular historical legal systems. In Marcuse’s philosophical system, resistance had no form in itself. It was a mode of contesting what is in the interests of what needed to be to ensure “humanity’s right to abolish exploitation and oppression.” He frequently linked violence and resistance together, but the relation he drew between these two concepts had less to do with practical forms of resistance than with the

⁴⁵ Herbert Marcuse, “The Problem of Violence and the Radical Opposition,” in *The New Left and the 1960s: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, ed. Douglas Kellner and Jeremy Shapiro, trans. Shiery M. Weber (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 73.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁸ As Douglas Kellner notes, “To a generation of intellectuals nurtured on relativism, ambiguity and neutrality, [Marcuse’s argument] was a difficult pill to swallow, and when students drew the line and told their teacher, ‘either you’re with us or against us,’ confused academics turned on Marcuse and accused him of corrupting the youth.” Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 284.

relation that existed between resistance and positive law. “I think that the concept of violence covers two different types,” Marcuse argued in his West Berlin lecture, “the institutionalized violence of the established system and the violence of resistance.”⁴⁹ His position nodded to the loosely dialectical understanding of violence (Gewalt) developed by Walter Benjamin in his 1921 essay “Critique of Violence.”⁵⁰ For Benjamin, violence served either a law-preserving or a law-making function. Law-preserving violence defended the established order against the aspiration of law-making violence to create a different societal order. According to Benjamin, a state’s monopoly on violence was not rooted in questions of justice. The “law’s interest in a monopoly of violence vis-a-vis individuals is not explained by the intention of preserving legal ends,” he argued, “but by that of preserving law itself.”⁵¹

Following Benjamin, Marcuse described “the violence of resistance” as law-making violence that “is necessarily illegal in relation to positive law.”⁵² According to Marcuse, the violence of resistance constituted any action or idea that might threaten the smooth functioning of an established legal order. Marcuse shared Benjamin’s view that any human activity that ran counter to the interests of the established legal order risked being located outside the realm of legality and thus subject to criminalization. “It is meaningless to speak of the legality of resistance,” Marcuse declared, “no social system, even the freest, can constitutionally legalize violence directed against itself.”⁵³ If one is to serve the “Opposition,” then one must be willing to break the law, Marcuse told students that weekend.

Freedom for Teufel

The largest New Left mobilization against the criminalization of dissent was the campaign to support the West Berlin activist Fritz Teufel. By late August 1967, Teufel seemed to embody the criminalization of dissent in West Germany. The Kommune 1 member was arrested on June 2 during the protests outside the German Opera House. Prosecutors accused him of throwing stones at police and held Teufel in pretrial custody for over two months. During this time, Teufel stood trial with fellow Kommunard Rainer Langhans for separate charges discussed below. The case against Teufel for his June 2 arrest was sorely lacking. It included the contradicting reports of the two arresting officers, which photographic evidence and the testimonies of 26 eyewitnesses disputed.⁵⁴ Adding to the sense of injustice among his supporters was the fact that as Teufel sat in jail, Ohnesorg’s assailant spent the summer free. Teufel’s case made him a cause

⁴⁹ Marcuse, “The Problem of Violence and the Radical Opposition,” 62.

⁵⁰ This essay appeared in an eponymous 1965 collection of Benjamin’s essays Marcuse provided the afterword for. Michael Salzinger provided a compelling account of the importance of Benjamin’s thoughts on violence for Marcuse. See Michael Salzinger, “Walter Benjamin-Theologe Der Revolution,” *Kürbiskern*, no. 4 (1968): 629–647.

⁵¹ Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 281.

⁵² Marcuse, “The Problem of Violence and the Radical Opposition,” 62.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ For a general overview of the case and controversy published at the time in late July, 1967, see Ulrich Preuß, “Der Fall Teufel,” *Die Zeit*, July 7, 1967.

célèbre throughout West Germany, Western Europe, and the United States.⁵⁵ Fliers and signs at demonstrations that summer demanded: “Teufel Raus—Kurras Rein” (Teufel Out—Kurras In).

Teufel’s criminalization became a source of significant mobilizing potential. It occasioned the massive Freiheit für Teufel (Freedom for Teufel) campaign, a sustained direct action and consciousness-raising effort that employed a diversity of tactics to pressure the courts into releasing Teufel.⁵⁶ Throughout the summer, activists in West Berlin held public forums, disrupted lectures and performances, blocked intersections, set off smoke bombs in public spaces, hung banners off prominent landmarks, interrupted trials, and even participated in a short-lived hunger strike to protest Teufel’s criminalization.⁵⁷ As Kommunard Dieter Kunzelmann recalled some twenty five years later:

There was a hysteria in the city, a hysteria against the antiauthoritarian movement that no one can imagine today. We were very isolated and there were many people who were scared to leave their houses. For us it was a totally different circumstance because our co-Kommunard, Fritz Teufel, was arrested on June 2, 1967. [...] He sat in jail. It was the first time since the beginning of the anti-authoritarian movement that an active member of this movement sat in jail. That was a fully new situation and because of this, we had to come up with completely new ideas.⁵⁸

In mid-July, seventeen activists stormed the Moabit courthouse and distributed hundreds of fake warrants for Diether Dehnicke, West Berlin’s district attorney. The warrant accused Dehnicke of “freedom robbery” against Fritz Teufel. The action forced the courthouse to close for half an hour as all the demonstrators were arrested, cited, and banned from entering the building. Activists returned again that afternoon and once more two days later to distribute further fliers in the courthouse.⁵⁹

By early August, the Freedom for Teufel campaign had become so active that *Die Welt* reported, “not a day passes when a political organization does not demand the Teufel’s [the devil’s] release.”⁶⁰ Even the tabloid *Bild* asserted that although Teufel might be a “muddle-head [...] he certainly is not a professional criminal who puts the lives and bodies of citizens at risk.”⁶¹ On August 10, authorities finally released Teufel, but only on the condition that he report to police twice a week and not leave West Berlin. His release was cause for celebration: the next

⁵⁵ See the statement “Westeuropäische Studenten fordern: Freiheit für Teufel!” signed by student groups in West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and France. Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 37, Folder XXXI. “Prozesse und Justiz,” Document 43.

⁵⁶ Many slogans and news reports on Fritz Teufel took advantage of the fact that the name Teufel also means devil. The “Freedom for Teufel” slogan can thus also be translated as “Freedom for the Devil.”

⁵⁷ For the most thorough account of the “Freiheit für Teufel” campaign, see Rabehl, “Die Provokationselite,” 481–494. Footage of many of these actions can be seen in in the film *Unsere Steine*, located in the Deutsche Kinemathek.

⁵⁸ Wolfgang Dreßen and Eckhard Siepmann, eds., “Interview mit Dieter Kunzelmann,” in *Nilpferd des höllischen Urwalds: Situationisten, Gruppe SPUR, Kommune 1* (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1991), 207.

⁵⁹ See the flier “Steckbrief” in APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder.

⁶⁰ “Studenten Fordern Rücktritt Des Justizsenators,” *Die Welt*, August 2, 1967.

⁶¹ “Warum Sollte Teufel Fluchten,” *Bild*, August 5, 1967.

day hundreds of singing and dancing supporters participated in what they called a *Happening-Demonstration*, which brought traffic on West Berlin's main boulevard to a standstill for hours.⁶²

Yet barely a week later, Teufel again appeared in front of the West Berlin jail he had just been released from. "I will not fulfill the requirement to report to the authorities," he declared, "I prefer to submit myself back into custody."⁶³ Teufel made his request to be re-arrested dressed in a penitent's gown with his hands chained together and an iron ball made of paper-mache attached to his foot. Only adding to the baffling scene was the 24-year-old activist's mode of transport: a large wooden cart pulled by two men dressed in black justice robes and executioner masks.⁶⁴ When the confused porter refused to accede to Teufel's request, he and the procession accompanying him moved just blocks away to the nearby Moabit courthouse where Teufel was to later stand trial. His repeat performance before the courthouse prompted a district attorney to come out and inform him that, although his refusal to report to the authorities technically violated the conditions of his release from pretrial confinement, he could not be taken back into custody at that time since he had not been ordered to do so by a judge. In reference to his lengthy history of arrests, Teufel quipped, "I've never had problems with this before."⁶⁵

Teufel's appearances outside the West Berlin jail and courthouse exemplifies the antiauthoritarian left's peculiar embrace of its criminal subjection by the West German judicial system. Despite its theatricality, Teufel's performance was not an imitation of criminality. He was purposefully breaking the law by violating the conditions of his arrest. The careful theatricalized staging of his refusal entailed less an outright opposition to the criminal subjectivity placed on him by the West Berlin judicial system than an overidentification with it. His costume and mode of transport were crucial components in a theatrical embrace of the criminality for which he had become notorious in the summer of 1967. By overidentifying with this subjectivity, Teufel presented for both onlookers and the media a hyperbolic image of the criminal that the law accused him of being.

Considering his well-known antiauthoritarian ethos, Teufel's willingness to subject himself again to jail seemed curious. He viewed the conditions placed on his freedom to be a form of continued subjection. While Dutschke and other friends implored him to avoid provoking his arrest, Teufel had other plans. "Retaining the arrest warrant was an affront," he later explained, "and the justice system had to be forced through my breaching the conditions of my release to either rescind them or to re-arrest me, which would only lead to an increased mobilization."⁶⁶ Instead of constraining his agency, Teufel's subjection became an opportunity to mobilize the

⁶² See the documents in Kommune 1, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, "Kommune 1" folder. See also Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 195–197.

⁶³ Quoted in Marco Carini, *Fritz Teufel: Wenn's der Wahrheitsfindung dient* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur, 2003), 75.

⁶⁴ For fliers and photographs of this action see *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, "Kommune 1" folder. For further accounts, see *Ibid.*, 75–76; Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 202–205; Rainer Langhans and Christa Ritter, eds., *K 1: das Bilderbuch der Kommune* (München: Blumenbar, 2008), 82–84.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 75.. Although Teufel failed in his attempt to be taken back into custody, police confiscated the cart the Kommunards had rented for the action because it was missing a light on its back. See Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 205.

⁶⁶ Fritz Teufel, "Rudi, Der Kampf Geht Weiter," *Taz*, January 15, 1980.

agency of others, which was, of course, aided by the attention-grabbing character of his theatricalized intervention. Conventional understandings of concepts like domination and subordination reach clear explanatory limits in the case of Teufel's criminalization. Although it was Teufel who sat in jail that summer, the agency that emerged from his individual subjection was assumed in large part by the growing movement that mobilized around his case, but whose efforts extended beyond the criminalization of one activist. The predicament faced by Teufel—that this agential capacity relied on his subjection—should not be taken to be what Judith Butler calls a “sign of a fatal self-contradiction.”⁶⁷ Teufel himself would make clear the ambivalent agency that emerged from his criminalization when he laconically noted in a 1980 interview, “My role in Kommune 1 was to sit in prison.”⁶⁸

On September 8, Teufel was ordered back into custody after he violated the conditions of his release by traveling to Frankfurt am Main for the annual meeting of the SDS. Teufel agreed to turn himself in the following week—but on his own terms. To mark the occasion of his arrest on September 15, Kommune 1 and the SDS organized a sit-in at city hall where the West Berlin Senate would be convening for the first time following its summer break. At the top of its agenda was the discussion item, “Riots and Agitation of Extreme Groups.”⁶⁹ The setting of his re-arrest during the city government's discussion of protest was carefully planned to contest the discourse that would likely be propounded during the meeting. As one flier explained, the sit-in was to be “a counter-court” against the city government, judicial system, and police force.⁷⁰

To advertise the sit-in, the SDS circulated a letter to its members asking: “Fritz wishes [...] to surrender himself on Friday [...] How do we get him into the [building] and then back out again?”⁷¹ Despite a massive deployment of police ready to apprehend him, Teufel entered city hall unnoticed. At 1:40PM, some 250 activists began their sit-in. Teufel sat amidst them still undiscovered by police who were actively searching the crowd for him. Half an hour into the demonstration, an officer surveying the crowd from a balcony finally spotted Teufel despite his disguise. The normally bearded and long-haired Teufel was dressed in a suit. His face was cleanly shaven and his hair trimmed.⁷² Teufel gave himself up without a struggle, but the crowd spontaneously prevented his transfer to jail for a further three hours by blockade nearby streets.

His rearrest became the occasion for even larger actions, including a five thousand person demonstration on October 7. Activists calling for Teufel's release interrupted multiple performances during the Berliner Festwochen in late September—including its premiere.⁷³ The mobilization reached its peak on November 21, 1967 when the worst rioting in West Germany since the Second World War erupted outside of the Moabit courthouse where Teufel faced the first day of his trial. Earlier that morning, Kurras had been acquitted of murdering Ohnesorg.

⁶⁷ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 17.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 70.

⁶⁹ For details of the action, see Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune 1*, 208–211; “Berlin: Teufel,” *Spiegel*, September 18, 1967.

⁷⁰ See the flier in *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder.

⁷¹ See SDS letter dated September 13, 1967 in *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder

⁷² See a parody of this in the short student film *Ewige Jagdgründe*, located in the Deutsche Kinemathek.

⁷³ Rabehl, “Die Provokationselite,” 490.

Students walked out of classes in protest, and many thousands clashed with 750 police officers who had to use water cannons to hold them back.⁷⁴ In a press release titled “Kurras Freigesprochen” (Kurras Released), AStA-FU declared that the verdict revealed “the political partisanship of the courts.”⁷⁵ An article published that day in the *Berliner Extra-Dienst* asked: “What could be more revealing of this justice system than the juxtaposition of the trials of Kurras and Teufel?”⁷⁶ One flier circulated by the SDS and several other students groups called on students to “Make use of the public sphere of trials... Show the justice system that they have to account with more observers than the press!!!!”⁷⁷

As this description of the Freedom for Teufel campaign should make clear, even the most individualized example of the criminalization of dissent involved a crucial collective dimension. A flier from late 1967 suggested that activists participated in protests against Teufel’s criminalization not because they believed they could “prevent” his trial or influence “judgments against [their] comrades.” They desired simply to stand in solidarity with someone who was “more or less being punished as exemplary of us all.”⁷⁸ Their performances of solidarity refused the atomizing tendency of criminalization. In a television interview with Günter Gaus in December 1967, Rudi Dutschke elaborated on the collective dimension of resisting the criminalization of dissent:

I have already been in prison, and none of us is scared of that. It does not mean that much anymore if we do something, are charged, and then go to jail. The next day, 100, 200, 300, perhaps even more friends that took part will turn themselves in to the police so that the individual is never singled out as an individual, so that he can simply be pocketed and destroyed, as in the past, by the bureaucracy and the state.⁷⁹

Instead of approaching criminalization as something to be feared, many antiauthoritarians viewed it as both a necessary risk and a potential mobilizing opportunity.

Despite the riots outside the courthouse, the most notable confrontation during Teufel’s trial took place within the courtroom on November 27, 1967. When the judge entered on the second morning of the proceedings, everyone stood except Teufel who remained slouched in his seat reading the newspaper. Only after the judge repeatedly ordered him to stand and show

⁷⁴ The student film *Unsere Steine* features striking footage of the protests. Located in the Deutsche Kinemathek.

⁷⁵ “Kurras Freigesprochen,” AStA INFO, 21.11.67. Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2. Juni 1967,” 3.

⁷⁶ “Warum demonstrieren wir heute gegen die Moabiter Justiz?” *Berliner EXTRA-Dienst*, November, 11, 1967 in Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 37, Folder XXXI, “Prozesse und Justiz,” Document 4.

⁷⁷ “Der Freispruch für Kurras und die U-Haft Fritz Teufels liegen auf der gleichen politischen Ebene!,” “Kurras wird freigesprochen!” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 37, Folder XXXI. “Prozesse und Justiz,” Document 11.

⁷⁸ “Kurras freigesprochen ! ! ! Offener Brief an den AStA,” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 34, Folder III. “Schah-Besuch und seine Folgen 2. Juni 1967,” Document 3.

⁷⁹ Rudi Dutschke interview with Günter Gaus, December 3, 1967, quoted in Martin Klimke, “We Are Not Going to Defend Ourselves Before Such a Justice System!”—1968 and the Courts,” *German Law Journal* 10, no. 3 (2009): 261.

respect to the court did Teufel comply, remarking as he got to his feet: “So long as it’s going to help the search for truth...”⁸⁰ While hardly the most shocking example of irreverent courtroom behavior, Teufel’s quip caused a sensation. As historian Martin Klimke explains, his comment became “a rallying cry for the mocking and disrespectful attitude of the student movement against West German authorities.”⁸¹ That evening, Teufel’s remark was broadcast as the lead story on the national news show Tagesschau. His words made headlines throughout Western Europe and the United States by the next morning. For his irreverence, the judge charged Teufel with contempt.

Although Teufel’s impertinent behavior quickly became memorialized as a slogan, the effect of his statement depended on him actually conforming to the established choreography of the courtroom. Without standing, Teufel’s off-the-cuff statement would hardly have been felicitous. It was only through his initial refusal to get up from his chair that Teufel’s eventual obedience to courtroom choreography would be of any interest at all. Teufel embraced the action dictated by the choreography of the courtroom, but for entirely different ends than those intended by the court. His obedient performance read as irreverence because his commentary pointed out how standing before the court does nothing for finding out the truth, but functions only to affirm the authority of the judicial system. By belittling the authority-affirming ceremonies of the court for contributing little to the “search for truth,” Teufel targeted both the legitimacy of the charges brought against him as well as the naturalness of the judicial authority being wielded against him.

As the German legal historian Uwe Wesel would later write of the popularity of Teufel’s famous remark: ‘The Federal Republic was laughing and it was a liberating laughter, namely the liberation from the authoritative manners in our courts.’⁸² And in their coverage of the trial, The International Herald Tribune noted the wide influence of Teufel’s case: “Thousands of young Europeans share Teufel’s passionate conviction that life on the continent is oppressed by authoritarian structures.”⁸³ Both of these assessments identify the mobilizing potential of Teufel’s remark, but they limit the aspiration of his gesture to a vague desire for liberation from authority. Such analyses ignore that Teufel acted with the knowledge that his performance would result in increased punishment. In the late 1960s, the task of antiauthoritarian activists facing criminalization was not simply to contest the charges brought against them, but to divert the very function of the trial at the level of what it produced: legal authority. “I have thrown a stone,” Teufel declared in the closing statement to his trial, “not at the uniformed men of the state, but into the mills of justice, so to speak, because I refused to be milled into flour for the production

⁸⁰ Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 227; Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 87–90; Simon Teune, “Humour as a Guerrilla Tactic: The West German: Student Movement’s Mockery of the Establishment,” *International Review of Social History*, no. 52 (2007): 124–125.

⁸¹ Klimke, “We Are Not Going to Defend Ourselves Before Such a Justice System!”—1968 and the Courts,” 262..

⁸² Quoted in Teune, “Humour as a Guerrilla Tactic: The West German: Student Movement’s Mockery of the Establishment,” 125. The original is Uwe Wesel, *Die verspielte Revolution: 1968 und die Folgen* (München: Blessing, 2002), 64.

⁸³ Quoted in Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 94.

of a law-and-order-bread.”⁸⁴ The court eventually cleared Teufel of all charges, but his acquittal came only after he had spent 148 days in jail.⁸⁵

The Moabit Soap Opera

Teufel’s disobedience before the West German courts is exemplary of attempts by activists to functionally transform the tightly regulated space of the courtroom into an exceptional space for dissent. With no choice but to participate in the proceedings against them, activists throughout 1967 and 1968 did all they could to refunction the trials for ends not intended by the court. No trial is more illustrative this strategy than the “Moabit Soap Opera,” which opened on July 6, 1967. The trial again featured Teufel, this time joined by another member of Kommune 1, Rainer Langhans. Both were charged by the West Berlin courts for “suspicion to incite life-threatening arson.”⁸⁶ The evidence against them included a series of satiric fliers they had produced and distributed with four other members of Kommune 1 a month earlier. The group had written the fliers to ridicule *Bild*’s dubious coverage of a department store fire in Brussels which Western Germany’s most read newspaper claimed had been set by student activists. Kommune 1 took the reporting to be another blatant example of the West German media’s strategy of defaming the emerging New Left. Unsurprisingly, when police investigators revealed just a day later that there was “no evidence of an attack” on the department store, *Bild* reported this development in small print on its last page.⁸⁷

Kommune 1 distributed the fliers outside the cafeteria of the FU on May 24, 1967—just two days after the fire. Rather than contest *Bild*’s misleading coverage, the authors satirically confirmed the paper’s speculations.⁸⁸ The most provocative of the four fliers, labeled simply “#8,” read like a manifesto issued by a militant West Berlin Maoist group. It opened with a question that quickly became infamous throughout West Germany: “When will the department stores in Berlin burn?” In addition to corroborating *Bild*’s coverage that the fire was in fact set by Belgian activists, the flier called on West German students to repeat the action in West Berlin as a protest against the Vietnam war. “Our Belgian friends have gotten knack of letting the public take part in the humorous hustle and bustle in Vietnam,” the flier declared:

No one needs to shed any more tears for the poor Vietnamese people while reading the morning paper. From now on, a person can go to the clothing department of KaDeWe, Hertie, Woolworth, Bilka, or Neckermann and casually light a cigarette in the dressing room. [...] Don’t be surprised if fires erupt sometime soon, if a barracks blow up

⁸⁴ Quoted in Klimke, “We Are Not Going to Defend Ourselves Before Such a Justice System!”—1968 and the Courts,” 261.

⁸⁵ In a statement delivered before the court on December 15, the day he was exonerated, Teufel declared: “As a thinking person, one must ask himself why I sat in custody for 148 days.” Like others, Teufel believed the judicial system had tried to make him “a shocking example for all.” Quoted in Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 87.

⁸⁶ Teufel and Langhans were charged under section 111, paragraphs 2 and 306 of West Germany’s Basic Law. See the reproduction of the indictment dated June 9, 1967 and published in *Gesammelte Werke Gegen Uns*, p. 15. located in IISH, “Kommune 1 Archive,” File 2.

⁸⁷ For an account of this controversy, see Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune 1*, 137–145.

⁸⁸ Copies of all of the fliers can be found in Archiv-APO, “Kommune 1” folder.

somewhere, if the grandstands in a stadium collapse, don't be surprised. No more so than when the Americans marched over the Demarcation Line, when Hanoi's city center was bombed, or when the marines invaded China.

It did not take long for Bild to weigh in on the fliers: “Whoever glorifies this catastrophe which was likely started by radical leftist arsonists, and recommends copying it should be put behind bars! Police and the district attorney should prosecute the creators of these fliers to the fullest extent of the law.” And just a day later, the paper continued its coverage, this time running another article that claimed Kommune 1 had “direct connections to the Brussels terrorists” responsible for the arson. Their evidence consisted solely of an excerpt from flier “6” in which Kommune 1 quoted a member of the entirely fictional Maoist group “Action for Peace and Friendship of the People” blithely describing the act of arson as a “happening.”

That the space of the courtroom presented both unique obstacles and opportunities for resistance was not lost on West Berlin students. For example, the evening before the trial opened, the SDS and AStA-FU hosted a public forum, “*Wie kann im Gericht gegen das Gericht protestiert werden?*” (“How can the court be protested in the court?”), focused specifically on the political possibilities of the upcoming trial. According to a flier advertising the forum, activists were concerned above all with the function of trials in a larger process that looked to “engender fear” and “demoraliz[e]” the entire German New Left. The grandiloquent Moabit Courthouse, for instance, was hardly a convenient site for dissent. Built in 1881, the monumental Wilhelmian building is a testament to judicial authority and ceremonial formality. Its high-ceilinged entry hall and staircases flanking both sides of the lobby seemed designed to make one feel small before the law. To get past an initial awe of the court’s authority, the flier encouraged students to visit go to the courthouse “to experience the first act of the justice comedy [Teufel and Langhans’ trial] and become familiar with the late-baroque halls of a late-bourgeois justice system.”⁸⁹ Activists hope the ostentatious surroundings of the courthouse would only amplify the clash between the irreverent behaviors of defendants and the ceremony of the judicial system.

From its start on the morning of July 6, the trial garnered immense public interest. Langhans and Teufel’s impertinent behavior only heightened the newsworthiness of the proceedings, which opened before a packed room of eighty students and sixty members of the press. Hundreds more waited outside in the vain hope of making it inside.⁹⁰ The crowds were joined by battalions of police stationed inside and outside the courthouse. Langhans himself was nearly barred from even entering the courthouse the first day of the trial. He arrived that morning dressed in sandals, dirty jeans, a white terry-cloth shirt, and a pink linen jacket with a Mao pin fastened to it. The guard mistook him for a transient, and initially refused him entry. It was not until Langhans proved he was standing trial that the leery guard allowed him inside. When Teufel first entered the courtroom after being held in custody for over a month, he was welcomed with cheers from supporters in the audience. The conservative newspaper Die Welt

⁸⁹ See the announcement in “Freiheit für Fritz Teufel,” in Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc. 1701, Box 37, Folder XXXI. “Prozesse und Justiz,” Document 32. See also the news report “Im Gericht gegen das Gericht,” Tagesspiegel (June 6, 1967).

⁹⁰ For details of the opening day, see Rainer Langhans and Fritz Teufel, *Klau mich* (Munich: Trikont, 1977), unpaginated; Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 69; Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 179.

described the countless flashes from the cameras of photographers as conjuring up “the fatal image of a show trial.”⁹¹

That first morning, the pair’s defense attorney Horst Mahler feigned wonder that the courtroom was made available on such quick notice—normally it had to be booked months ahead of time. The swiftness of the pretrial process fueled speculation that authorities were trying to make an example out of Teufel and Langhans. In his opening remarks, the presiding judge Walter Schwerdtner dismissed these concerns:

Furthermore, I would like to say: in the press, radio, and on television, one always hears the expression ‘Political public prosecutors or the political district attorney’s office.’

There’s no such thing. If there is a branch of the district attorney’s office and particular public prosecutors that must deal with political matters, this does not mean that the district attorney judges according to anything other than the book of law.⁹²

Schwerdtner’s claim that the charges were a precise application of the written law disavowed the performative space necessary for applying written texts onto real world situations. Far from being “arbitrary” or “accidental,” Bernard Hibbits argues that the privileging of legal texts characteristic of legal formalism “complements prevailing legal epistemology, which for over two hundred years has consciously favored certainty, fixity, objectivity and rationality, ‘scientific’ values that seem better represented by text than by performance.” Schwerdtner’s emphasis on textual application over performative interpretation seemed itself to be a performance of ceremonial authority.

The Kommunards wasted no time attacking these ceremonies. And they made no attempt to hide their intent to ridicule the court’s legal authority. Langhans himself admitted exactly this during his testimony the first day. When asked by the prosecutor how the fliers fit within Kommune 1’s larger political strategy, Langhans described Kommune 1’s aversion to “aggressive forms” of direct action like throwing stones or arson. “Instead,” he explained, “we are trying to make authority—for example, you—look ridiculous so that others reject your ways of operating.” The very articulation of this tactic in court was itself a performance of the tactic. The pair drew on a repertoire of irreverence that violated the expected choreography of the courtroom. This included regularly addressing the audience, insulting the prosecutor, judge, and witnesses, sitting and standing on tables, among other disobedient behaviors. Additionally, the pair utilized the massive media presence to transform the court into a public stage from which they expounded the merits of shoplifting, sexual liberation, and the expropriation of private property. In earlier interviews with the press, several members of Kommune 1 had shocked the West German public by revealing anxieties with their sexual performance. When Judge Schwerdtner asked the pair about their “sexual difficulties,” the defendants shocked the court by asking the judge about his own relationship with his wife.

⁹¹ “‘Gruss Dich Fritz’ Rufen Die Freunde: Gelächter Im Gerichtssaal—Ist Der Angeklagte Teufel Ein Brandstifter.”

⁹² All quotations from the Moabit Soap Opera come from the court transcript which was reproduced in Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*, unpaginated. This transcript is based on the shorthand notes of Hans-Joachim Frohner who covered the trial for a West German radio station. For the original transcript, see APO-A, “Frohner-Unterlagen: Prozessmitschriften K I, Kurras u.a.”

Mahler's defense tried contesting the court's criminal categorization of the fliers by defending them as works of art. He did so by convening a board of sixteen notable artists and professors to carefully study the fliers and report back on their literary quality. The expert panel, which included such luminaries as Peter Szondi and Günter Grass, concluded that the fliers were tasteless satire but certainly not worthy of criminal prosecution.⁹³ When Mahler submitted this written testimony on the first day of the trial, the judge and prosecutor dismissed it as irrelevant.

The next day Langhans caused a minor sensation when he entered the courtroom blowing bubbles and handing out provocative fliers that declared: "You marbly old men and snotshitters of the law. We will cut off your ears, you servants of the law."⁹⁴ Hardly had the second day begun when Judge Schwerdtner called for the trial's immediate suspension so that Langhans and Teufel could undergo psychiatric examinations. The pair's lawyer Horst Mahler protested this decision claiming that the court was attempting "to defame the rebellious students of Berlin" by "putting their soundness of mind into question." Instead of siding with Mahler's claim that the judge's decision was just another way to depoliticize students, Langhans and Teufel expressed pleasure in Judge Schwerdtner's order. "I'll agree to this examination," Teufel declared in open court, "as long as the members of the court and the district attorney also undergo a psychiatric examination." His agreement was a clear protest of Schwerdtner's ruling. But unlike Mahler's objection, Teufel's act of resistance willingly obeyed the courts. Mahler's procedural approach failed, but Teufel succeeded in again mocking the court's authority. His comment caused the audience to start cheering so wildly that Schwerdtner had no choice but to order everyone out of the courtroom. After a lengthy recess, the audience was allowed to reenter, but only after signing an agreement promising to behave. When the trial resumed, Schwerdtner permitted Langhans to make a statement about the proposed suspension. Langhans echoed Teufel's impertinent motion, with one addendum:

I don't actually know to what extent this is allowed, but I'd like to second the motion of my friend Fritz but add to it. In addition to a psychiatric examination of the members of the court, the prosecutors, and the defense, an intelligence test should also be given to everyone and the detailed results must be published.

A renewed outburst from the audience sent Judge Schwerdtner and his assistant judges rushing back to their chambers to deliberate. They returned just minutes later and suspended the trial indefinitely. Schwerdtner explained:

Considering the obvious deviance of their personalities from the norm, particularly their behaviors, statements, and lifestyle, both defendants should undergo psychiatric and

⁹³ The other experts included, Reinhard, Baumart, Wolfgang Fietkau, Helmar Frank, Günter Grass, Theodor Hardtmann, Klaus Heinrich, Wolfgang Hochheimer, Walter Jens, Alexander Kluge, Michael Landmann, Charles Nichols, Irmela and Klaus Reimers, and Gerhard Zwerenz. Other scholars including Theodor Adorno had been asked, but declined to testify. The expert testimonies read before the court were later officially published in *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* 28 (1968), 321-342 and also in "Ein Gutachten Zur Anklageschrift Im Prozeß Langhans/Teufel," *Merkur*, no. 236 (1967): 1072-1079. Excerpts are also available in *Gesammelte Werke gegen uns*, IISH, "Kommune 1 Archive," File 2.

⁹⁴ See the flier reproduced in "Quellen für Kommuneforschung," APO-A, "Kommune 1" folder. See also "Teufel Und Langhans Werden Psychiatrisch Untersucht," *Spiegel*, July 8, 1967.

neurological examinations from the chief court doctor Dr. Spengler of the State-Institute for Court and Social Medicine, Berlin.

After less than two days, the unconventional behavior of the defendants forced the trial's suspension, which would not resume until eight months later.

The refusal of the Kommunards to perform according to the expected choreography of the courts generated tremendous publicity. The laughing faces of Teufel and Langhans adorned almost every major newspaper in West Germany. The trial became a national stage from which the Kommunards propounded antiauthoritarian values as newspapers passed along their messages word for word. The media described the trial alternately as theater, a happening, pop-art, and even an act of surrealism. Eventually the papers dubbed the trial the "Moabit Soap Opera." Much of the coverage noted how successfully the defendants achieved their aim of making the judge and prosecutor look "ridiculous," with *Die Zeit* declaring that during the proceedings, the Kommunards "fed and fed on their favorite dish: authority."⁹⁵ This metaphor aptly suggests their resistance depended on the presence of authority as its very condition of possibility. Instead of approaching the trial as something necessary to overcome, the Kommunards looked to take advantage of it. "The provocation succeeded," *Spiegel* reported. "Society makes a fool of itself, exposes itself, reacts in such a way that the lurid attack abruptly becomes right."⁹⁶

Of course, not all newspapers were sympathetic to the Kommunards. On July 12, 1967, *Bild* published a short piece titled, "Nur ein Spaß?" (Only a Joke?):

We know it already: Everything that troupe of irresistibly attractive bubble blowers does is only a joke.

We know it already: We are the dopes, the crass philistines that don't get the joke or the "subtle" Pop-Art-Satire of Teufel and his comrades.

Nonetheless, *Bild* continued to portray the Kommunards in a criminal light, declaring that everyone should be wary of their "arson and death threats." The enemy of students, *Bild* argued, was not the justice system, the mayor, the city council, the police, and certainly not "the newspaper publishers of this city." The enemies of students "sit among them." They are the radical minority who "speak of democracy but mean violence," even violence "in joking." As West Berlin's largest daily newspaper, *Bild*'s popularity gave it the authority necessary to pronounce what constituted violence. Their report is illustrative of Marcuse and Benjamin's argument regarding the contingent historical character of violence. *Bild*'s influence just like the power of the court demonstrated that the ontology of violence is the authority to decide what constitute violence.

⁹⁵ "Ruf Nach Dem Psychiater," *Die Zeit*, July 10, 1967.

⁹⁶ "Und Abends Sind Sie Nett Zu Ihrer Frau: Prozess Gegen Gegen Die Studenten Langhans Und Teufel in Berlin," *Spiegel*, July 10, 1967.

When the trial finally resumed in March 1968, no one doubted that the Kommunards would once again try to travesty the court. In the intervening eight months, Kommune 1 continued its oblique assault on the judicial system. On January 6, 1968, they joined three hundred members of the SDS in an unconventional protest against the courts outside the annual Berlin Justice System Ball. As prosecutors and judges arrived to the black-tie affair, waiting activists pelted them with snowballs.⁹⁷ In February, Teufel was again arrested and sentenced to two months in jail for disrupting a trial against friends charged for interrupting the screening of the racist film *Africa Addio* two years earlier.⁹⁸ A former Nazi judge, Kurt Gente, presided over the case. When he entered the courtroom the first day of the proceedings, the audience stood in unison to give him the Nazi salute. Later in the day, Teufel and others stormed into the courtroom lighting off firecrackers, which forced the evacuation of the courtroom.⁹⁹

Upon arriving to the Moabit Courthouse on March 4, 1968, Teufel, Langhans, and hundreds of supporters were surprised to learn that the trial had been moved from the largest courtroom to a room with only twenty seats, and seven of these were reserved for plain-clothes and uniformed police. Horst Mahler protested the room change by calling the decision an intentional “restriction on the public sphere.” Judge Schwerdtner mockingly replied, “Well, we could move to a sports arena.” Both Teufel and Langhans eagerly replied to this suggestion with a simultaneous “Oh, yeah!” Of even greater concern for Mahler, however, was the fact that the new courtroom was often reserved for cases involving the mentally ill. “Already the choice of room documents a specific attitude [on behalf of the court],” Mahler declared, echoing his earlier objection in the summer that the court was attempting to frame the Kommunards as deviants.

When Mahler motioned for a change of venue and the removal of police, the prosecutor responded by blaming Teufel and Langhans for the measures: “[T]he defendants themselves [...] made these measures necessary when they publicly transformed the court into a Wild West playground.” After Schwerdtner refused to consider Mahler’s motion, the pair’s attorney horrified the court by comparing the trial to a Nazi tribunal: “I hold [the presence of so many officers in the courtroom] to be the beginning of an alarming development that could only lead to a parallel with the manipulative constitution of the audience like in the trials of the *Volksgerichtshof* [Nazi People’s Court].” Mahler then announced he would be stepping down as counsel for the defendants until his motion was accepted. When the court appointed a public defender to represent Teufel and Langhans against their protestations, the pair repeated Mahler’s provocative comparison of the court to the *Volksgerichtshof*. While other antiauthoritarians frequently called attention to the continuity of personnel and laws between the legal systems of the Third Reich and the Federal Republic, Teufel and Langhan’s accusations operated in a different manner. They did not target particular legal structures, persons, or even the charges brought against them. Their aim was to undermine the very authority of the judicial system.

⁹⁷ Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 95–96; Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 240. See flier reproduced in “Quellen für Kommuneforschung,” APO-A, “Kommune 1” folder.

⁹⁸ For details of the *Afrika Addio* protests, see Chapter Two.

⁹⁹ Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 96–97.

The pair's attempts to travesty the court took a number of forms. On the very first day of the trial, Teufel replayed the begrudging scene of standing before the court that had won him international headlines in November. When ordered to approach the bench to present testimony, he refused to stand up, explaining, "I don't have any desire to stand. I've had so many trials that it would seriously impair my health if I always had to keep standing." Schwerdtner responded by threatening him with contempt before deciding to ignore him. Instead he asked Langhans to come before the court. Langhans replied, "But there's no chair." Instead of confronting Langhans, Schwerdtner invited him to bring his chair with him. Langhans complied by dragging his chair slowly across the ground, making no effort to keep it from making a horrendous scratching sound. Following Langhans' testimony, the judge turned back to Teufel and once again tried to get him to approach the bench. Their exchange was interrupted, however, by the noise of Langhans pulling his chair back to the table. In response to the judge's irritation at Langhans, Teufel simply noted: "The chairs for the defendants are unbelievably shabby and uncomfortable."

During the proceedings, even minor violations of courtroom choreography were enough to provoke the judge:

SCHWERDTNER: When you are speaking don't lean on the table.

LANGHANS: Why not?

SCHWERDTNER: Because that could be interpreted as contempt of court.

LANGHANS: How can that be interpreted as such?

SCHWERDTNER: Because it's normal for one to stand straight before the court...

At one point, Teufel's mere presence in the court became too much for Schwerdtner to bear—after Teufel repeatedly interrupted the court to complain about the pair's court-appointed attorney, Schwerdtner simply kicked him out of the room. When Teufel was finally permitted to return, he showed little remorse for his previous behavior and picked up where he left:

SCHWERDTNER: Mr. Teufel, put away the newspaper.

TEUFEL: Why shouldn't I read the newspaper? During the first trial, even the state prosecutor took a nap.

SCHWERDTNER: You are risking your next contempt charge.

TEUFEL: I believe we'll have to have a debate about that sometime.

Schwerdtner does not listen to him.

Schwerdtner's attempt to control the courtroom by handing out charges of contempt only played into the hands of the defendants who openly ridiculed his autocratic character. When the prosecution invited a psychiatrist to comment on the mental health of the defendants, Teufel asked the witness: "Is there a diagnosable illness in psychiatry that has to do with the needing to impose charges of contempt? Are there any previous cases of this and what type of therapy would you recommend?" Teufel's lampoon refunctioned the purpose of the psychiatrist's testimony, which was to paint the defendants as mentally unstable. Rather than dispute the testimony, Teufel used the psychiatrist to call attention to Schwerdtner's authoritarian proclivities. For this, Schwerdtner sentenced Teufel to two days in jail.

Despite Schwerdtner's use of his power, the defendants did not give in. Early in the trial, Teufel was asked to give his personal details. He refused to do so and asked to explain why:

Today I stand today for the fourth time before the court in a political trial. My life has become rather well-known since the first staging of this trial last July which failed because of the court's incompetence.

When the prosecutor interrupted Teufel to request he be charged with contempt for insulting the court, the defendant continued without missing a beat:

...and because this trial failed due to the court's incompetence, I think it would be more interesting and throw more light on these complicated hearings if the prosecution and members of the court said something about their own life and CV. I believe the public is entitled to this.

Teufel's insult earned him another charge of contempt. His challenge of the court's competence called into question the very authority of the trial. For Max Weber, authority is that which complements or enhances power. Whereas power pertains strictly to the ability to persuade or coerce an individual to do something, authority entails the legitimacy or justification to use such power and have it accepted by others. Authority is that which enhances or authorizes power so that it is accepted as legitimate by whomever is subjected to it.¹⁰⁰ Teufel and Langhans' attacks on the court's authority signaled a refusal to accept the legitimacy of their criminalization. It was also an attempt to compel similar attitudes in others.

As one journalist covering the trial noted, the pair "collected charges of contempt like trophies."¹⁰¹ The contempt charges came so frequently that at one point Teufel himself had to remind the judge that he still had a charge pending, for which he was handed another. According to one reporter, the sheer number of contempt charges Schwerdtner gave out did little to help him gain control over the trial: "He wanted to keep from losing his face but didn't realize that he had long ago lost it."¹⁰² Although the prosecution demanded a nine-month prison sentence without parole, Teufel and Langhans were acquitted of all charges and released.

The Aura of Illegality

Among the earliest public discussions within the German New Left on the legal system took place on February 9, 1966, when 150 members of the SDS met in West Berlin for a public forum on "Legality and Illegality." The forum took its name from the title of a 1920 essay by Georg Lukács. In this essay, Lukács critiqued both the "cretinism of legality" and the "romance of illegality" in radical thought and practice. Although he was critical of the "ideological foundation of legality" Lukács argued against a complete rejection of all forms of legal action.¹⁰³ He described the "romantic hypostatisation of 'illegality'" to be an "infantile disorder" that naively ignored potentially productive legal means of organization and action.¹⁰⁴ More importantly, to conflate revolutionary activity with illegal activity, Lukács insisted, was to

¹⁰⁰ Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 106.

¹⁰² Quoted in *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 263.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 269.

submit oneself to the very authority that defined what was legal and illegal. In other words, a political program that privileged illegal actions just for their illegality indexed an “ideological attachment [...] to bourgeois concepts of law.”¹⁰⁵ The “aura of illegality,” according to Lukács, “endows the existing state with a certain legal validity, with a more than just empirical existence.”¹⁰⁶ Like the “opportunists” who hold fast to the law, “heroes of illegality” do not contest the historical character of the existing system of laws, but “maintain the fiction in the minds of the masses that its system of law is the only system.”¹⁰⁷ For Lukács, “the question of legality and illegality” should be replaced by careful consideration of the “utility” of particular tactics.¹⁰⁸ In short, Lukács recommended activists approach the law with “complete indifference.”¹⁰⁹ A revolutionary’s relation to the law should be like that of a sailor to the wind: a sailor does not “take exact note of the direction of the wind without letting the wind determine his course; on the contrary, he defies and exploits it in order to hold fast to his original course.”¹¹⁰

While many antiauthoritarian activists worked to take advantage of the law in striking ways, their spectacular interventions against the judicial system often risked taking on the form of a “grand gesture” of illegality. As Lukács argued, such gestures do not contest the legitimacy of the law, but “suggest that the law has preserved its authority—admittedly in an inverted form—that it is still in a position inwardly to influence one’s actions and that a genuine, inner emancipation has not yet occurred.”¹¹¹ Without wanting to argue that the Moabit Soap Opera avoided the hazards described by Lukács, I would like to conclude by considering how the increasing mediatization of West German society in the late 1960s made it necessary for activists facing criminalization to take seriously their interventions as performances of “grand gestures.” But rather than risk reaffirming authority, these grand gestures allowed them to undermine the very authority of the court.

The pair’s in-court strategy, Langhans later admitted, was carefully planned and their spontaneous acts consciously staged for the media: “Our joyful faces, our fun, our intellectual skills were very subtle. There was nothing that was unplanned. All these court stories were infinitely calculated events.”¹¹² The Kommunards even published the transcript of their trial in the form of a bestselling play script titled *Klau Mich* (Steal Me). The script came complete with stage directions, scene and act divisions, and a list of characters. Following the trial, one theater critic even described Teufel as “the most remarkable German playwright of the sixties” while Peter Handke celebrated the pair for inaugurating a new form of engaged theater.¹¹³ All of this

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 264.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 263.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 265.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 264; 266.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 264.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 262.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 263.

¹¹² Interview with Langhans quoted in Klimke, “We Are Not Going to Defend Ourselves Before Such a Justice System!”—1968 and the Courts,” 269.

¹¹³ Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 68.

has led scholars to describe Teufel and Langhans' courtroom actions using the categories of performance. But to simply label their trial a "courtroom happening" or to situate it within a tradition of performance art without attending to the nuances of their interventions risks underestimating or even depoliticizing their tactics.¹¹⁴

Arguably the strongest articulation of their performance approach to the trial was offered by Langhans himself in his closing statement to the Moabit Soap Opera. In court, Langhans described the trial as a piece of puppet theater that he and Teufel gradually became producers of. He detailed the "roles" each member of the court played, labeling Judge Schwerdtner the "star" since he had demanded so much of the spotlight:

We don't often get to see such a play. No author of a play for the Theater of the Absurd could have come up with a better one. Most often, we were not even performers in it, because it was not our game. It would not have even occurred to us that one could create plays like this. We only became performers and then more like directors when we realized the opportunities being offered to us. [...] We are curious [about the verdict] and thank you for this play.

The defendants were not alone in viewing the trial in such terms. Shortly after the trial's conclusion, *Die Zeit* ran an article on the trial whose title, "*Die Verfolgung Und Ermordung Der Straffjustiz Durch Die Herren Teufel Und Langhans*" (The Persecution and Assassination of the Justice System by Mr. Teufel and Mr. Langhans), alluded to Peter Weiss' immensely popular play of the time *Marat/Sade*.¹¹⁵ The article opened by explaining how a successful trial depended on all parties performing the role intended for them. Particularly important in the cast was the defendant:

If the defendant doesn't play his role, difficulties arise for the other performers who must adapt out of their normal roles. A defendant who remains indifferent to the verdict is an extraordinary sight: he appears free. For a moment, Mr. Teufel and Mr. Langhans were this sight.

According to *Die Zeit*, this allowed the pair to "reveal[...] the mechanics" of the trial, while providing inspiration to others. In a telling summary of what could be learned from the Moabit Soap Opera the article concluded that the judicial system should not be evaluated on whether "the authority of the courts frighten the defendants. In the future, laws and conventions that rule our criminal proceedings should be measured by whether they serve the search for truth. If they do not, we should do without them."

¹¹⁴ Mererid P. Davies, "Bodily Issues: The West German Anti-Authoritarian Movement and the Semiotics of Dirt," in *Un-Civilizing Processes? Excess and Transgression in German Society and Culture: Perspectives Debating with Norbert Elias.*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 225–254; Charity Scribner, "Buildings on Fire: The Situationist International and the Red Army Faction," *Grey Room*, no. 26 (Winter 2007): 30–55.

¹¹⁵ "Die Verfolgung Und Ermordung Der Straffjustiz Durch Die Herren Teufel Und Langhans," *Die Zeit*, March 29, 1968.

CHAPTER FOUR

The End(s) of Art in New Left Aesthetics

“If the organization of society, whether by accident or design, uses the culture industry, the consciousness industry, and the monopolistic control of opinion to bar the way to the most basic knowledge and experience of the most dangerous processes and the most essential critical ideas, and if, going far beyond that, society paralyzes people’s ability to imagine the world in concrete terms as being anything other than it appears to be, then the fixed and manipulated state of minds becomes a real force, too. But it becomes the force of repression, which is just as potent in its own way as had been, once upon a time, its opposite, namely, free spirit, which wished to do away with repression once and for all.”

–Theodor Adorno

In the final interview of his life—a May 1969 conversation with *Spiegel* editors Dieter Brumm and Ernst Elitz—Theodor Adorno declared, “I am not at all ashamed to say very publicly that I am working on a lengthy book on aesthetics.”¹ The manuscript he mentioned, *Aesthetic Theory*, would never be completed. Just three months later, the 66-year-old director of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* in Frankfurt am Main suffered a fatal heart attack while vacationing with his wife in Switzerland. His proviso indexed the climate of the time in West Germany, when art seemed to be under attack by a generation of students intent on declaring, as Adorno put it in *Aesthetic Theory*, “the age of art is over; now it is a matter of realizing its truth content.”²

Leading the charge on the assault against art was Kultur und Revolution. As one of many issue-specific working groups of the West Berlin SDS, Kultur und Revolution used direct action

¹ Theodor W. Adorno, “Keine Angst Vor Dem Elfenbeinturm: Spiegel-Gespräch Mit Dem Frankfurter Sozialphilosophen Professor Theodor W. Adorno,” *Spiegel*, May 5, 1969, 209.

² Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 251.

and provocative polemics to interrogate the fraught relation between aesthetics and politics. The group first made a name for itself in June 1968 by disrupting two prominent international art festivals. Already that year, protests had forced early closures of the Cannes Film Festival and the Milan Triennale. When organizers of the Venice Biennale deployed a massive police presence to protect its opening ceremony against expected protests, Kultur und Revolution circulated a flier satirically designating the some six thousand officers works of art. The flier invited the public to an open viewing of the police, offering the opportunity to “see” and “confront [*auseinandersetzen*] them.”³ That the verb *auseinandersetzen* can be used to describe riots and other violent conflicts gave the sardonic invitation a militant tenor. To affix the label of art to riot police poked fun at the authority to decide what counted as art. The flier underscored the repressive power required for art’s very exhibition, and by extension, it made plain the interests Kultur und Revolution believed a festival like the Venice Biennale served.

A week later, Kultur und Revolution followed their flier action in Venice with a considerably more forceful intervention at the international art fair *documenta*, held every five years in Kassel, Germany. Often remembered as the “Pop *documenta*” on account of its role in confirming the ascendance of Pop Art in Europe, the fourth *documenta* attracted huge crowds. But before the first visitors even entered the famed Fridericianum, a series of disruptions cast doubt on whether the exhibition would even open. Several artists frustrated by the curators’ decision to exclude Fluxus performance from the art fair interrupted the preliminary press conference with a raucous happening.⁴ Days later at *documenta*’s outdoor opening reception, dozens of demonstrators organized by Kultur und Revolution stormed the courtyard chanting and shouting insults at the curatorial committee. On the exhibition hall’s facade, they draped red and black flags, and a banner declaring, “*Die herrschende Kunst ist die Kunst der Herrschenden*” (The Ruling Art is the Art of the Rulers). By substituting “art” for “ideas” in its allusion to Marx and Engels’ famous dictum from *The German Ideology*, the banner averred art’s role in social

³ Reproduced in Wolf Vostell, *Aktionen. Happenings Und Demonstrationen Seit 1965* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1970).

⁴ The happening demonstration was led by several artists, among them Wolf Vostell and Jörg Immendorf. See Harald Kimpel, *Documenta: Mythos Und Wirklichkeit* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1999), 339–340; Willi Bongard, “Markt Für 100 Tage,” *Die Zeit*, July 19, 1968; Laszlo Glozer, “Aktion Ist Alles—was Ist Kunst?,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, August 10, 1968.

domination. It suggested that the production of art was determined not by those subjected to its manipulation, but by those who oversaw the division of labor. The fliers *Kultur und Revolution* handed out that day hammered this point home by deriding art as an “inhumane instrument of human oppression under the existing repressive order.”⁵

The defensive tone Adorno took in his final interview was undoubtedly shaped by events like these. But it was also informed by his own frequent face-offs with West German students on the topic of art in the years he was writing and lecturing on *Aesthetic Theory*. These confrontations left their mark on Adorno’s influential tome in several ways, not the least being the role he cast the New Left. In *Aesthetic Theory*, “student activists” are the latest in an unsavory lineage of “historically decadent groups,” whose actions and declarations ruthlessly demanded “the end of art.”⁶ Like the fascist philistines and Stalinist apparatchiks who came before them, they appear as iconoclasts impatient with art’s formal qualities. The opening sentence of *Aesthetic Theory* placed the tenuous social condition of art front and center: “It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist.”⁷ No single figure who appears in *Aesthetic Theory* better personifies the cause of art’s uncertain status than the German New Left, whose aesthetic sentiment Adorno witheringly judged to be “totalitarian.” “For contemporary consciousness, and especially for student activists,” he declared, “the immanent difficulties of art, no less than its social isolation, amount to its condemnation.”⁸ Their “avant-gardist disruptions of aesthetically avant-garde performances,” such as those performed by *Kultur und Revolution*, were a “trick [...] already practiced by Fascism,” one that “revalorizes [...] the incapacity for sublimation, as a superior quality and sets a moral premium on the line of least resistance.”⁹ Despite the German New Left’s self-proclaimed radicality, Adorno disparaged their calls for “the demise of art” as “a gesture of conformism.”¹⁰

When reading *Aesthetic Theory*, it is easy to envision late 1960s West Germany as a

⁵ Kimpel, *Documenta: Mythos Und Wirklichkeit*, 339.

⁶ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 320.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁰ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 319.

place blistering with intolerance toward all things aesthetic. It certainly must have felt that way for Adorno whose lectures were frequently disrupted and whose own writing on art was the butt of countless student invectives. The sense that this was a period dominated by hostility to art has been reinforced in art historical accounts.¹¹ Yet during the heady and politically uncertain times of the late 1960s in West Germany, there was hardly a shortage of debates on art and aesthetics. If anything defined the New Left's relation to art, it was not a discursive proscription on aesthetics, but a proliferation of public debate. Stormy disputes on art were not confined to lecture halls and academic journals. They filled the pages of newspapers and raged on the stages of theaters, even playing out in factories and courtrooms. As I argue here, the guiding principle of the New Left discourse on aesthetics was a call not for the end of art, but rather for art to serve other ends—namely the purposes of radical political struggle. New Left groups like Kultur und Revolution challenged art's function in society, not its existence. But for Adorno, even inquiring into art's social function was to call it into question. Why did the “re-engagement” of art for some appear as “the end of art” to others?

The familiar periodizing approach to this question presents the New Left as inaugurating a postmodern culture that superseded the high modernist forms privileged by the likes of Adorno. Yet as Andreas Huyssen has convincingly argued, at stake for the New Left in 1960s West Germany was not a complete rejection of modern art. In Huyssen's telling, the New Left conviction that the prevailing modernism had provided “cultural legitimation for the Adenauer restoration” of West Germany motivated “a search for alternative cultural traditions within modernity.”¹² This helps explain Kultur und Revolution's disruption of documenta. The art fair was originally founded to attest culturally to West Germany's transition from fascism and to make up for Nazi attacks on modern art. The aim of documenta founder Arnold Bode exemplifies the purposes of postwar modernism in West Germany as described by Huyssen: to “reclaim a civilized modernity and to find a cultural identity tuned to international modernism which would make others forget Germany's past as predator and pariah of the modern world.”¹³

¹¹ See Andreas Huyssen, “The Cultural Politics of Pop,” in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 141–159.

¹² Andreas Huyssen, “Mapping the Postmodern,” *New German Critique*, no. 33 (1984): 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*

In the late 1960s, groups like Kultur und Revolution viewed art's errand with disdain. Like the redemptive rhetoric that drove the reconstruction efforts of the Adenauer governments, art's restorative function was accused of veiling emergent forms of social domination while obscuring lingering structural problems.

Although Huyssen's account helps illuminate what drove student activists of the time, his argument that they sought "a return to modernism rather than a step beyond it" is ultimately imprecise.¹⁴ Groups like Kultur und Revolution certainly drew inspiration from the suppressed modernism of Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, and the expressionists, but to conflate this with a "return" to a past modernity is to ignore the contingent historical contours of New Left aesthetics, particularly the New Left's selective embrace of past traditions. To say the late 1960s witnessed "a major shift in evaluation and interest from one set of moderns to another" is descriptively useful, but it risks eliding the contradictions, disagreements, and inconsistencies that constituted the period itself.¹⁵

The following chapter tracks how concern for the use-value and social function of art propelled New Left aesthetics. Although the German New Left refused cultural elitism, administered culture, and abstraction, to suggest its adversary was modernism would be to confine the New Left's object of contestation—social domination—to the aesthetic realm. The New Left approached the institutions affiliated with postwar modernism as belonging to an entire network of what Hans Magnus Enzensberger called "immaterial exploitation." According to Enzensberger's influential view, art had become enveloped by a powerful "consciousness industry" whose main business was "to 'sell' the existing order, to perpetuate the prevailing pattern of man's domination by man, [...] to expand and train our consciousness—in order to exploit it."¹⁶ Through careful study of the New Left's mixed perspectives on aesthetics as they played out in debates and disruptions of art exhibits and performances, I examine why activist attempts to undo the consciousness industry by redeeming the public sphere failed to organize social experience beyond capitalist relations of production. I suggest that their evaluation of high

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "The Industrialization of the Mind," in *The Consciousness Industry* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 10.

modernist culture based as it was almost exclusively on categories like “use” and “function” left their critique vulnerable to functional transformation as the particularity on which the circulation of capital ultimately depends. Moreover, the ambition to eliminate abstraction from culture because it was presumed to be essential to intellectual domination would be far from liberating for the masses. It did not abolish elitism; it only delegitimized the utopian potential that could help individuals to collectively organize their own experiences outside the dictates of the capitalist totality.

The Work of Art in an Age of Industrialized Consciousness

At first glance, Kultur und Revolution’s intervention at documenta confirms rather than contests Adorno’s accusation of New Left iconoclasm. But in addition to not wishing for the end of art itself, their criticism was not necessarily targeted at art. Instead, the group took as their object of critique a broader network of social domination that they believed prevailing forms of art and culture contributed to in significant ways. Several months after their disruption of documenta, Kultur und Revolution issued a sharper articulation of their perspective in a provocative polemic published on the front page of the culture section of the West German weekly *Die Zeit*. The short article “*Kunst als Ware der Bewußtseinsindustrie*” (Art as a Commodity of the Conscious Industry) first appeared in November 1968 and sparked a furious two month debate in *Die Zeit*, eliciting contributions from a number of the German-speaking world’s most respected artists and critics.¹⁷ No other piece of writing from this period occasioned fiercer public exchange on the function of art in the Federal Republic, making it an exemplary expression of New Left aesthetics from which to begin our discussion.

The broadside opened with a familiar Frankfurt School critique of consumption, describing how the “constant progressive development of production power” together with the “concentration of economic power in ever fewer hands” had led to an overproduction of

¹⁷ See *Die Zeit*, issues 48-51 (1968) and 1-6 (1969). For overviews of the debate in English, see Huyssen, “The Cultural Politics of Pop,” 149–152; Sabine Von Dirke, *All Power to the Imagination!: The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 49–54.

commodities.¹⁸ Such overproduction, so Kultur und Revolution's argument went, had fundamentally changed the character of consumption in West Germany. Rather than satisfy existing needs, overproduction created "new needs" necessary for meeting the level of consumption required by the oversupply of products. This reconfigured the system of exchange whereby "supply determines demand." Aided by the power of advertising, an entirely new form of consumption defined by the interests of the overproducers became possible. In short, Kultur und Revolution argued that production had come to determine consumption in a way that replaced the need to rationally understand why one needed a new commodity with the questionless consent to consume new goods. According to Kultur und Revolution, the culture industry bolstered this new type of consumption by offering products that did not prompt critical reflection, but rather imposed "harmony" and a sense that "resistance is not necessary."

Although Kultur und Revolution were influenced by Adorno and Horkheimer's theory of the culture industry, they broke sharply with the authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* on several points. For example, Kultur und Revolution claimed that works of so-called "high" art were just as imbricated in the operation of social domination as the commodities of mass culture. They rejected the Adornian notion that art existed as "the determinate negation of a determinate society."¹⁹ On the question of the commodity status of art, Adorno's position actually concurs with Kultur und Revolution, albeit with one crucial exception: Adorno claimed art's appearance as a commodity paradoxically leant it its potential social negativity. The very fact that art is something made means it is already "implicitly *a fait social*."²⁰ Art for Adorno, however, is inherently "uncertain" about this sociality—it has what he calls a "double character." Though art exists as a made social thing, Adorno's dialectical lens presents an "authentic" work of art as also developing immanently according to its own internal "laws of movement."²¹ The immanent formal development of an artwork stands separate from its social character, thereby giving art "that irritating indeterminateness of what it is and to what purpose it is."²² Although this makes a work difficult—even impossible—to comprehend, in a capitalist society where even culture is

¹⁸ Kultur und Revolution, "Kunst Als Ware Der Bewutseinsindustrie," *Die Zeit*, November 29, 1968.

¹⁹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 225–226.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 225.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²² *Ibid.*, 21.

useful for the purposes of exchange, Adorno lauds “the immanent difficulties” of art for the very fact that they do not make for the sorts of easy entertainment designed to facilitate production and capital circulation.²³ At the same time, he concedes that art’s appearance “as something-in-itself” is “responsible in no small way for the fetish character of artworks.”²⁴ Yet he crucially distinguishes between the particular fetish character of art as going “beyond commodity fetishism.”²⁵ Unlike the fetish character of the commodity described by Marx in which something produced need appear as useful for others in order to be exchanged, the fetish character of an autonomous work of art rests in the fact that it exists in itself and not simply for the purposes of exchange: “Fetishization expresses the paradox of all art that is no longer self-evident to itself: the paradox that something made exists for its own sake; precisely this paradox is the vital nerve of new art.”²⁶ This is where Adorno locates the “truth content” of art, its “social truth.” If the fetish character of the commodity masks “domination,” then art’s appearance of “being-in-itself is the mask of truth.”²⁷ Nevertheless, Adorno’s historical account admits that the very possibility for the autonomy of art—on which the fetish character of art depends—itself depends on reification. It was only in its “bourgeois form” that “[a]rt was only ever able to exist as a separate sphere,” Adorno and Horkheimer write in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In earlier periods of society, artists “were protected from the market” by means of private patronage. But patronage also disallowed art’s autonomy since works “were subject to the patrons and their purposes instead.”²⁸ Paradoxically then, it is “the anonymity of the market” and the commodity system, that allows for the work of art’s autonomy, and thus its truth content.

For the likes of Kultur und Revolution, this potentially liberating character of art mattered little when considering art’s contribution to social domination. They rejected as bourgeois elitism the very belief that high art had any more of a redemptive or liberating potential than mass culture. In fact, it was just such a conviction that made art, in their opinion, “a considerable

²³ Ibid., 14.

²⁴ Ibid., 184.

²⁵ Ibid., 227.

²⁶ Ibid., 22.

²⁷ Ibid., 227.

²⁸ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 127.

support for the ruling system” by helping to produce the psychic consent to domination necessary for sustaining capitalist relations of production.²⁹ Where Adorno found resistant potentiality in the “immanent difficulties” of art, *Kultur und Revolution* saw only another form of domination:

[Art] produces a general willingness on the part of the dominated to acknowledge the competence of the dominant class. By stripping rationality from the experience of art, art becomes intimidating and thus consolidates the consciousness of subordination.

According to *Kultur und Revolution*, “intellectual domination” was “the precondition for domination in all other areas.” They embraced arguments that took high art as providing an “aesthetic alibi” for domination. but the brunt of their critique examined how art itself operated as a “means for the production of consciousness,” and, by extension, contributed to the “oppression of consciousness.” They broke with Adorno both conceptually and terminologically by focusing not on the culture industry but the “consciousness industry,” a notion drawn from Hans Magnus Enzensberger’s 1962 essay “The Industrialization of the Mind.”

According to Enzensberger, previous “archaic methods” of social domination like the forceful coercion of laboring classes had become unsuited to a period of improving living and education standards of the postwar era.³⁰ “What is being abolished in today’s affluent societies, from Moscow to Los Angeles is not exploitation,” he wrote at the height of West Germany’s *Wirtschaftswunder* in the early 1960s, “but our awareness of it.”³¹ He argued that ruling elites now worked “to control people’s minds” through the consciousness industry.³² This theory of a system of immaterial exploitation in which capital uses art, the entertainment sector, the press, and the education system to manipulate human desire and administer social life resonated strongly with the social analysis of Adorno and Herbert Marcuse. But like other theorists of his generation such as Jürgen Habermas and Oskar Negt, Enzensberger presented a theory of social domination that was both more materialist and optimistic than those provided by his forebears in the Frankfurt School. He belonged to a generation older than the New Left, but was considerably younger than the founders of critical theory to whom he owed much intellectually.

²⁹ *Kultur und Revolution*, “Kunst Als Ware Der Bewutseinsindustrie.”

³⁰ Enzensberger, “The Industrialization of the Mind,” 8–9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³² *Ibid.*, 11.

Enzensberger's emerging status as one of the German New Left's chief mentors would strain his relationship with Theodor Adorno, whom he had befriended while living in Frankfurt am Main in the early 1960s.³³ Not only did students revere Enzensberger's poetry, but *Kursbuch*, the journal he had founded and edited, was mandatory reading for New Left activists.

Conceptually, the consciousness industry departed from earlier Frankfurt School theories of social domination in striking ways. Enzensberger broke with Marcuse by replacing psychic transformation as the condition for social liberation with the need to functionally transform hegemonic institutions. And where Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* had stressed the futility of reshaping the objective structures of advanced capitalism, Enzensberger argued that such a possibility was brought into being by the inherent contradictions of the consciousness industry itself. For Enzensberger, the consciousness industry is best understood as an "intermediary" involved in the transmission, distribution, and delivery of products. Although the "consciousness industry" can "take on anything, digest it, reproduce it, and pour it out," the fact that it is not a site of production means it depends for its very existence on "the creative productivity of people." In contrast to the culture industry, the consciousness industry does not "produce anything." Its mediatory power is significant, but its reliance "on the very substance it must fear most" leaves it vulnerable to refunctioning at the point of production. Instead of avoiding engagement with the consciousness industry, Enzensberger urged participation in it. This was a far cry from Adorno and Horkheimer's resigned prescription for coping with the culture industry. But Enzensberger claimed that the culture industry as a model of social analysis was "vague and insufficient" because it indicted "the consciousness industry on purely esthetic grounds." To grasp the "consequences, both sociological and political that extend from the industrialization of the mind," one must, he insisted, go beyond the realm of culture and examine the "phenomena as a whole." The social function performed by individual segments of the consciousness industry could only be comprehended by considering the function of the consciousness industry itself. The culture industry, Enzensberger insisted, reflected "the social status of those who have tried to analyze it: university professors and academic writers." According to Enzensberger, these individuals who "bear the unfortunate names of cultural

³³ Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno: A Biography*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005), 409–411. On Enzensberger's friendship with Adorno, see Müller-Doohm 409-411.

critics” are “certified as harmless” by the ruling elite since they “think in terms of *Kultur* and not in terms of power.”³⁴

Kultur und Revolution took Enzensberger’s argument a step further in their claim that art was an instrument of “intellectual domination.” In so doing, they triggered one of the most sustained public debates on aesthetics in late 1960s West Germany. For nine straight weeks, every issue of *Die Zeit* featured responses to Kultur und Revolution’s polemic. Many of their critics accused Kultur und Revolution of nihilistically advocating “the liquidation of art.”³⁵ But instead of demanding the end of art, Kultur und Revolution called explicitly for “a progressive art-production [*Kunstproduktion*].”³⁶ The emphasis on the entire “production” process is crucial for grappling with their position, since they viewed the consciousness industry’s role as a distribution apparatus predicated on the “functional transformation [*Umfunktionierung*] of art,” or repurposing art to serve the status quo. As evidence, Kultur und Revolution pointed to the fate of “serious music,” the medium of art that Adorno prized. Even if music contained within it the resistant character Adorno claimed for it, this potential, Kultur und Revolution contended, was neutralized through the manner in which the consciousness industry mediated and disseminated it. “The packaging aesthetic of the record industry,” for instance, changed nothing about a piece of music itself, but it did “define [its] function [...] through its mode of reception.” While a work might retain truth content, its functional transformation through the consciousness industry, Kultur und Revolution argued, undid that element. Even the most radical art could be put to pernicious uses by the consciousness industry. Thus, instead of a “progressive art,” Kultur und Revolution insisted on the “elimination of the producer-consumer relationship” as well as “the social conditions that make this separation possible.”³⁷

In his insightful review of the debate, Andreas Huyssen faulted Kultur und Revolution for viewing art “as nothing but a means of domination” and depriving high art “of its utopian and anticipatory element.”³⁸ In their attacks on the complicity of art with intellectual domination, Kultur und Revolution certainly risked eliding the truth content Adorno himself located in art.

³⁴ Enzensberger, “The Industrialization of the Mind,” 4–5.

³⁵ See Dieter Zimmerman, “Die Große Liquidierung,” *Die Zeit*, December 14, 1968.

³⁶ Kultur und Revolution, “Kunst Als Ware Der Bewutseinsindustrie.”

³⁷ See also Kultur und Revolution’s trenchant critique of theater director Peter Zadek in the same article.

³⁸ Huyssen, “The Cultural Politics of Pop,” 150.

For Adorno, abolishing this truth content amounted to a rejection of art itself. But rather than follow Adorno here, I would like to consider the type of art that New Left activists believed could emerge by replacing abstract truth content with, what they termed, “revolutionary use-value.” In doing so, I explore the consequences of the New Left’s emphasis on use-value, itself a category integral to capitalist relations only knowable in counterpoint to exchange-value.

Walter Benjamin’s Materialist Aesthetics

The central categories of New Left aesthetics—production, function, and use-value—owed much to Walter Benjamin, whose work was embraced by the New Left in West Germany in the late 1960s. *Kultur und Revolution*’s position rearticulated Benjamin’s thesis in “The Author as Producer” regarding the insufficiency of an artwork’s revolutionary tendency when faced with a “bourgeois apparatus of production and publication” that could easily appropriate even the most revolutionary material.³⁹ Instead of being determined by the attitude of an artist or content of a work, Benjamin contended that the function of art derived from its “technique”—how it stood “vis-a-vis the social relations of production of its time.”⁴⁰

First written in 1934 as an address to the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris, “The Author as Producer” was not published until 1966 when it appeared in the collection *Versuche über Brecht*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann.⁴¹ The rediscovery of “The Author as Producer” and several other texts by Benjamin in and around 1966 and 1967 proved formative for the emergence of New Left aesthetics. Prior to the late 1960s, Benjamin’s work had received only scant attention since his 1940 suicide on the French-Spanish border while fleeing the Nazis. After the Second World War, the Paris National Library entrusted his surviving work to Adorno and his wife Gretel. Almost singlehandedly, the pair kept alive the theological and metaphysical aspects of Benjamin’s thought in West Germany by overseeing the publication of several collections of his work, beginning in 1955 with the two-volume *Schriften*, and followed by

³⁹ Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer,” in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael William Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y Levin, trans. E. F. N Jephcott (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 86.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴¹ Walter Benjamin, *Versuche über Brecht*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978).

several other volumes over the next decade. It was not until the publication of new collections of Benjamin's work in 1966, however, that Benjamin's now international reputation began to take hold. The appearance of these works, many of which revealed a previously little known Marxist side of Benjamin's thought, triggered furious public debate. Critics in magazines, newspapers, and academic journals throughout West Germany accused Adorno of intentionally effacing evidence of Benjamin's Marxist positions by carefully leaving out particular works from earlier collections or even deleting sections of essays.⁴² "A rumor is spreading," wrote Wolfram Schütte in an article on the debate for the *Frankfurter Rundschau* on January 19, 1968:

[...] the rumor that Walter Benjamin's extensive work was intentionally published only partly in order to feed the interpretation that his writing was esoteric and only understandable by the initiated. Works that evidence Benjamin's turn to Marxism were, if not repressed and distorted, then certainly minimized and covered over by Theodor Adorno's "official" interpretation.⁴³

The conflict ostensibly centered on Adorno's stewardship of Benjamin's work, but it went beyond philological concerns. It became an occasion for students and scholars associated with the German New Left to disparage Adorno and the high modernist sensibility he seemed to exemplify. Benjamin's popularity was due as much to his ideas as his usefulness in authorizing a break from Adorno and the modernism thought he stood for.

None of the contributions to this early debate around Benjamin's work caused more controversy—not to mention a threatened lawsuit from Adorno and Suhrkamp Verlag—than a special issue on Benjamin published by the New Left journal *Alternative* in November 1967. In her introduction to the issue, *Alternative* editor Hildegard Brenner presented a philological critique of Adorno's "problematic" editorial practice. She explained that the contributors to *Alternative's* special issue sought "to trigger a revision of the Benjamin-Portrait." Through careful readings of several works that had been presumed lost or had appeared previously only in edited form, *Alternative* offered, so Brenner claimed, an exegesis of Benjamin's forgotten "materialist aesthetic."⁴⁴ But implicit in this was the desire to theoretically authorize a particular

⁴² For an overview of these debates, see Erdmut Wizisla, *Benjamin und Brecht: die Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004).

⁴³ Wolfram Schütte, "Eingriffe? Es Geht Um WB," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, January 19, 1968.

⁴⁴ Hildegard Brenner, "Zu Diesem Heft," *Alternative*, no. 56/57 (December 1967): 1.

approach to aesthetics and politics.

Central to this revised portrait of Benjamin's work was its distinction from then-prevailing theories of art. In his article for the issue, for example, Helmut Lethen, a 28-year-old student, presented the theory of art sketched by Benjamin in essays like "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility" and "The Author as Producer" as a "radical break with the art theory of the late bourgeois phase."⁴⁵ Benjamin's analysis of the decay of aura, Lethen insisted, accomplished nothing less than the "destruction of the late-bourgeois category of art," of which he positioned Adorno as representative.⁴⁶ In the same issue, Piet Gruchot celebrated Benjamin's work in similar terms, claiming that Benjamin offered "nothing less than the foundation of a Marxist aesthetic and a new determination of the role of artists and intellectuals in society."⁴⁷ According to Gruchot, Benjamin did more than simply treat the role of artists in society as a "theoretical problem"—he gave "bourgeois intellectuals advice on how abstract solidarity can be concretely transformed" into praxis.⁴⁸ Gruchot presented Benjamin as telling artists that to struggle with workers, they must stop producing work for the bourgeoisie and instead "functionally transform" the bourgeois means of production.⁴⁹

For Lethen, Gruchot, and others, Benjamin exemplified a rejection of bourgeois art and theory. Many commentators have since disputed the New Left's narrow focus on the "resolute politicization of art" in Benjamin's work. Jürgen Habermas, for example, has argued that Benjamin's emphasis on the "relation of art and political praxis in the organizing and propagandistic realization of art for the class struggle" was an anomaly in his system of thought, both with regards to "his own theory of art and history."⁵⁰ Even the texts favored most by students were read selectively. For example, Benjamin's New Left devotees tended to ignore his careful emphasis in essays like "The Author as Producer" and "The Work of Art..." on stylistic and formal aesthetic innovations, as well as categories like technique and technology.

⁴⁵ Helmut Lethen, "Zur Materialistisches Kunsttheorie WBs," *Alternative*, no. 56/57 (December 1967): 231.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁴⁷ Piet Gruchot, "Konstruktive Sabotage: WB Und Der Bürgerliche Intellektuelle," *Alternative*, no. 56/57 (December 1967): 205.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁵⁰ Jürgen Habermas, "Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism: The Contemporaneity of Walter Benjamin," trans. Philip Brewster and Carl Howard Buchner, *New German Critique*, no. 17 (Spring 1979): 55–56.

But the point to be emphasized is not the accuracy of the New Left's readings of Benjamin, but what such readings suggest about New Left aesthetics. In addition to categories like production and distribution, Benjamin introduced the category of art's "revolutionary use-value" to the New Left. "Benjamin's materialist theory of art," wrote Lethen, was concerned less with categories of art than art's function in society. He reminded readers that the "The Work of Art..." historicized both the ritual and exhibition functions of art, while criticizing their persistence in modernity for fostering a private and privileged viewing experience that removed art's sociality. Art's social isolation within the capitalist mode of production, Lethen asserted, amounted to art's "social impotence."⁵¹ The "contemplative reception" of art by "lonely individuals" served a particular function in the early stages of the bourgeoisie's emancipation, but Benjamin focused chiefly on the "liberation" of the proletariat, which required not "the bourgeois privilege of education," but "revolutionary praxis."⁵² The "dignity" Lethen attributed to Benjamin's "materialist theory of art" was in its pinpointing a "lack of 'revolutionary use-value'" as the signature of bourgeois art, and suggesting the possibility for a different tradition.⁵³

Lethen drew the category of "revolutionary use-value" directly from "The Author as Producer." Here Benjamin distinguished between works of art with "revolutionary use-value" and those that "possessed no other social function than to wring from the political situation a continuous stream of novel effects for the entertainment of the public."⁵⁴ Against the affirmative "political" and "economic" functions put to art by capitalism, Benjamin, drawing on Brecht, championed art's functional transformation.⁵⁵ He advocated works that refused direct usefulness for capitalist exchange—either as commodities themselves, in assisting the circulation of commodities through advertising, or by affirming existing forms of life through beautiful representations that obscured actual social relations. Only by giving to art an "organizing function"—that is, using art to literally agitate and organize the proletariat—did Benjamin believe an artwork be "wrenche[d] from modish commerce" and given "a revolutionary use-

⁵¹ Helmut Lethen, "Zur Materialistisches Kunsttheorie WBs," 227.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 228.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁴ Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," 86.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

value.”⁵⁶ But what would it mean for art to take on revolutionary use-value? More crucially, did art’s usefulness necessarily entail its escape from capitalist social relations?

The Death and Use of Literature

The desire to give art use-value was motivated chiefly by frustrations over the enmeshment of even ostensibly progressive modernist art within the consciousness industry. One of the earliest interventions against the arts targeted the celebrated West German literary circle, Gruppe 47. Named for the year of its 1947 founding by Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter, Gruppe 47 was the single most influential literary circle in postwar West Germany. Following the horrors of the Third Reich, the loosely organized network of writers set for itself the task of establishing literature as a democratic force in West Germany. Leading members like Günter Grass shared a commitment to developing a national literature that thoroughly scrutinized Germany’s fascist history. Gruppe 47 was not an official organization with fixed membership. It was defined by annual meetings that gathered together many of the German-speaking world’s leading writers for readings and critical discussions of new work.

On October 7, 1967, the second morning of Gruppe 47’s twenty-ninth and final meeting at a hotel in Waischenfeld, West Germany, forty students from nearby Erlangen assembled outside the venue to distribute fliers, and post banners and a Vietnam flag on the hotel’s facade.⁵⁷ The student presence took many in attendance by surprise, especially when demonstrators began interrupting the meeting. During a reading by the Swedish writer Lars Gustafsson, for instance, activists caused a stir by blowing children’s horns just outside the room’s door. One student dressed in a clown costume entered the room carrying a sign attached to balloons that read, “*Hier tagt die Familie Saubermann*” (The family of cleaners are meeting here) before popping the balloons. Meanwhile, other students gathered in the hotel courtyard goading the writers inside with taunting chants like “*Die Gruppe 47 ist ein Papiertiger*” (Gruppe 47 is a paper tiger),

⁵⁶ Ibid., 89; 87.

⁵⁷ The following discussion draws details from: Ullrich Ott and Friedrich Pfafflin, *Protest! Literatur Um 1968* (Marbach: Marbacher Kataloge, 1998); Marcel Reich-Ranicki, “Revolte Im Wohlstand,” *Spiegel*, August 16, 1999; “Dichter, Dichter,” *Spiegel*, October 16, 1967.

“*Dichter, Dichter*” (Poet, Poet), and “*Ja zum fröhlichen Gruppenbegräbnis*” (Hurrah for a happy group burial). Despite the ludicrousness of the protest’s particular elements, the intervention had been coordinated with two of the writers in attendance, Reinhard Lettau and Erich Fried, and had a particular goal in mind: to challenge West German literature’s enmeshment in the consciousness industry. The fliers handed out by students called for the country’s most influential group of writers to boycott the West Germany’s largest publishing house, the conservative Springer Verlag. The evening before, a dozen of the some eighty writers gathered to discuss the threat posed by the Springer Verlag’s near monopoly of the West German press. They composed an “Anti-Springer Resolution” which Lettau read during a plenary meeting of Gruppe 47 the afternoon of the demonstration. It declared that the concentration of such a large portion of West Germany’s newspapers in the hands of the Springer Verlag presented a serious “danger” to the “public sphere” and “the foundation of parliamentary democracy in Germany.” The resolution concluded with three determinations:

1. We will not work with any newspapers or magazines belonging to the Springer Corporation.
2. We expect our publishers to not advertise our books in any newspapers or magazines belonging to the Springer Corporation.
3. We request all writers, agents, critics and academics, our colleagues in PEN and in the German academy to consider whether they should continue working further with the Springer Company.⁵⁸

At the meeting, demonstrators performed their disgust for Springer in striking fashion when several students set fire to copies of the Springer-published *Bild*.

These interventions were part of an ongoing effort in 1967 and 1968 against the publisher called the *Enteignet Springer* (Expropriate Springer) campaign.⁵⁹ Activists and intellectuals alike feared that the Springer Verlag—which controlled over 70 percent of the print media in West Berlin alone—had become a powerful instrument of domination.⁶⁰ Its most popular publication,

⁵⁸ Quoted in “*Dichter, Dichter*.”

⁵⁹ For examples of buttons, fliers, and stickers from the campaign, see Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc 1701 Karton 317 Id. 1001-X VI “Anti-Springer Kampagne—Frühjahr 1968,” 1-54.

⁶⁰ See Hans-Dieter Müller Müller, *Press Power: A Study of Axel Springer*, trans. J.A. Cole (London: MacDonald & Co, 1969); Peter Humphreys, *Media and Media Policy in Germany: The Press and Broadcasting Since 1945* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1994).

Bild, was also Europe's bestselling newspaper with daily sales of between four and five million in West Germany. While the Springer Verlag was not officially affiliated with a specific party, the publisher's support for the conservative CDU was obvious in the anti-leftist and pro-American positions its stories presented. In the late 1960s, publications owned by Axel Springer regularly ran sensationalist stories that accused student activists of being terrorists or East German spies. When West Berlin police shot and killed Benno Ohnesorg during a demonstration on June 2, 1967, Springer papers refused to run the full details of the case, vehemently siding with police.⁶¹ Such reporting led many in the New Left to compare the Springer Verlag with Joseph Goebbels' propaganda ministry for creating a "pogrom atmosphere." While certainly inflated, the Nazi comparisons indexed a very real anxiety about the danger the Springer Verlag posed to "striking workers, socialists, intellectuals, students at all levels."⁶²

The most notable events in the *Enteignet Springer* campaign was the Springer Tribunal held at West Berlin's Technical University in early February 1968. The weekend conference featured talks by activists, scholars, and journalists who examined the threat the Springer Verlag presented to the "freedom of the press" and the "democratic public sphere."⁶³ The event concluded with a verdict condemning the publisher. After the first day of the Springer Tribunal, demonstrators smashed the windows of the *Berliner Morgenpost* owned by Springer.⁶⁴ Some blamed a short film screened that day titled *Herstellung eines Molotow-Cocktails* (Making a Molotov Cocktail), produced by future Red Army Faction leader Holger Meins. The provocative film juxtaposed instructions on how to make a Molotov cocktail with images of the Springer headquarters in West Berlin, implying such weapons be used against it.⁶⁵

⁶¹ See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

⁶² "Was haben wir getan?" in Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc 1701 Karton 317 Id. 1001-X VI "Anti-Springer Kampagne—Frühjahr 1968," Document 7.

⁶³ "Hearing über den Springer-Konzern" Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc 1701 Karton 317 Id. 1001-X VI "Anti-Springer Kampagne—Frühjahr 1968."

⁶⁴ Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2011), 177–180; Michael Schmidtke, *Der Aufbruch der jungen Intelligenz: die 68er Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und den USA* (Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 2003), 86–87.

⁶⁵ For information on the film, see Gerd Conrath, *Starbuck Holger Meins: ein Porträt als Zeitbild* (Berlin: Espresso, 2001), 71–82.

Confrontations with the Springer Verlag reached a fever pitch two months later when, on April 11, 1968, a deranged 23-year-old art student from Munich named Joseph Bachman shot the student leader Rudi Dutschke three times in the head at close range outside the SDS headquarters in West Berlin. Word quickly spread that Bachman was an avid reader of *Bild*, copies of which he carried in his bag that day. Remarkably, Dutschke survived the attack, but the attempt on his life sparked the Easter Riots, the largest series of protests to take place in 1960s West Germany. Over the course of five days, more than 300,000 people took to the streets in twenty West German cities and at least a dozen more internationally under the slogan “*Bild schoß mit*” (Bild shot too). Demonstrators in West Germany set fire to Springer trucks, blockaded the publisher’s buildings, and battled with police. Nearly one thousand people were arrested and hundreds of police and demonstrators were severely injured. In Munich, the riots left one demonstrator and a journalist dead.⁶⁶

For many, the shooting of Dutschke concretized the danger of the consciousness industry. On April 19, 1968, Theodor Adorno issued a short declaration coauthored with fourteen other scholars which was circulated widely in newspapers like *Die Zeit*. They accused the Springer Verlag of “publicity manipulation” and demanded a public debate on the “political and economic” interests it served.⁶⁷ Others proposed a markedly different approach to the Springer Verlag. Journalists like Ulrike Meinhof celebrated the Easter Riots as a necessary and literal intervention against the distribution apparatus of the consciousness industry. “After June 2, people merely set Springer papers on fire,” she wrote in a famous column on the riots, “this time they tried to prevent their distribution.”⁶⁸ Activists couched the property destruction and sabotage against Springer in similar terms. “Springer’s cars burnt so that its papers could not be delivered. Why should deliveries be blocked? Because we do not want any more victims of the Springer Press!” declared one flier in the days immediately following the riots.⁶⁹ Despite the

⁶⁶ For the most comprehensive details of the East Riots in English, see See Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003), 170-181

⁶⁷ “Die Erklärung Der Vierzehn,” *Die Zeit*, April 19, 1968.

⁶⁸ Ulrike Marie Meinhof, “From Protest to Resistance,” in *Everybody Talks About the Weather— We Don’t: The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof*, ed. Karin Bauer, trans. Luise von Flotow (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 240.

⁶⁹ Untitled flier in Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240, Acc 1701 Karton 317 Id. 1001-X VI “Anti-Springer Kampagne—Frühjahr 1968,” Document 6.

tactical differences, both positions responded to the same threat: the manipulation of public consciousness.

For Enzensberger, the consciousness industry was not reducible to the mass media. But like Jürgen Habermas, he viewed the press as a central site of consciousness formation. Habermas' landmark 1962 book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* situated the mass news media as a component of the consciousness industry. Habermas referenced Enzensberger's article to explain the central role played by mass media in the transformation from a "culture debating to a culture-consuming public."⁷⁰ The consumption of debate staged by elites on radio and television replaced "the rational debate of private people," making debate itself "a salable package ready for the box office."⁷¹ Public deliberation on pressing social issues, according to Habermas, had become a commodity rather than a private practice. In short, the mass news media took from individuals the opportunity to organize their own social experience and perspectives.

That the writers gathered at the Gruppe 47 meeting signed the "Anti-Springer" resolution hardly eliminated West German literature's role in social domination. For many, Gruppe 47 and its close ties to the SPD exemplified the sort of modernism that had provided "cultural legitimation for the Adenauer restoration" even while acting as a prominent voice of opposition to Adenauer's government.⁷² By the mid-1960s, many current and former Gruppe 47 writers claimed the group had lost its oppositional character, not the least following the SPD electoral gains that culminated in their coalition with the CDU in December 1966. Future Nobel Prize winner Heinrich Böll published a scathing critique of Gruppe 47's active support for the SPD's 1965 election campaign. Such party identification, he argued, indicated the group's failure to fulfill the role of the radical social critic it boasted for itself.⁷³ Two years later, the satirist Robert Neumann publicly accused Gruppe 47 of being a "literature-mafia" whose happy acceptance of

⁷⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991), 159.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁷² Huyssen, "Mapping the Postmodern," 19.

⁷³ Heinrich Böll, "Angst Vor Der Gruppe 47," in *Die Gruppe 47*, ed. Reinhard Lettau (Berlin: Luchterhand, 1967), 397.

subsidies from the government it ostensibly opposed compromised its ability to dissent.⁷⁴

Other criticisms circulating at the time targeted not just Gruppe 47 but literature more generally. The contributions to *Kursbuch* 15, edited by Enzensberger in the fall of 1968, offered perhaps the most searing assessment of the contemporary state of West German literature. In a subtle reference to student chants at the Gruppe 47 protest, Karl Markus Michel criticized the well-known relationship between many Gruppe 47 writers and the SPD, declaring the literary circle to be not even a “paper-tiger, but a lapdog.”⁷⁵ The issue drew accusations that it called for the “death of literature.” But rather than demand the demise of literature, *Kursbuch* 15 took aim at the function literature performed in West German society. The closest any of the contributors came to declaring literature’s death was the critic and publisher Walter Boehlich who advocated not the end of all literature, but the “death of bourgeois literature.”⁷⁶

Perhaps the most outspoken critic of Gruppe 47 was Enzensberger himself. Although Enzensberger had once regularly attended meetings of Gruppe 47, he skipped the 1967 gathering after causing a stir at the group’s meeting year earlier at Princeton University when he and other writers took part in a sit-in against the Vietnam War with American students. Enzensberger’s contribution to *Kursbuch* 15, “Commonplaces Concerning the Newest Literature,” presented literature in the postwar era as having assumed the “peculiar role” of demonstrating to the world that Germany had shed its fascist past.⁷⁷ By the late 1960s, Günter Grass had become Gruppe 47’s most famous member, not to mention its biggest champion. It is no coincidence that Enzensberger cited Grass’ 1958 novel *The Tin Drum* as exemplary of writing that tried to help West Germany “compensate, at least intellectually, for the complete bankruptcy of the German Reich.” Such literature, Enzensberger claimed, functioned as a superstructural “alibi” for a nation that had not reconfigured any of the “power and ownership conditions” responsible for the rise of fascism. In Enzensberger’s view, “the absence of a genuine political life” in West

⁷⁴ Robert Neumann, “Spezies: Gruppe 47 in Berlin,” *Konkret*, May 1967, 37.

⁷⁵ Karl Markus Michel, “Ein Kranz Für Die Literatur: Fünf Variationen Über Eine These,” *Kursbuch*, no. 15 (November 1968): 177.

⁷⁶ Walter Boehlich, “Autodafé,” *Kursbuch*, no. 15 (November 1968).

⁷⁷ Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “Commonplaces Concerning the Newest Literature,” in *The Consciousness Industry* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 83–84. The article originally appeared in German as Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “Gemeinplätze, Die Neueste Literatur,” *Kursbuch*, no. 15 (November 1968): 187–197.

Germany had been covered over by a “cultural facade.” Literature did not contribute to West German politics, but performed “exonerating and surrogate functions.” It had effectively become a substitute for authentic political life.⁷⁸

Enzensberger’s article agreed with—and helps to explain—the student banner in Waischensfeld that had described Gruppe 47 as a “family of cleaners.” But nowhere did he call for the death of literature. In fact, his essay opens by mocking such a proposal as a century-old marketing ploy that bourgeois literature had made “the basis of its existence.” Enzensberger explicitly disapproved of “the liquidation of literature,” especially if such an endeavor involved wasting potential revolutionary energy on “aging belletrists” and not “the power of the State.”⁷⁹ In the case of literature, the problem was not the writers, but the market interests to which they were subjected. The uneasy slippage in his essay between “the imperative of the market” and “power of the state” was symptomatic of a historical moment in which economic and state projects seemed tightly bound to one another. Nevertheless, the distinction Enzensberger stressed was clear: “Militant groups should attack the cultural apparatuses whose social function—in contrast to that of poetry and prose—is only too clearly recognizable and without whose rule ruling has become inconceivable.” The chief concern for Enzensberger in 1968 remained the same as it had in 1962: the “production relation of the consciousness industry.”⁸⁰ According to Enzensberger, severing ties with a publisher like the Springer Verlag was hardly sufficient since it did not free writers from market imperatives more generally. By the 1960s, literary agents and publishing house representatives on the hunt for new work were a staple of Gruppe 47 meetings, a fact that led Enzensberger to publicly dismiss the group as a “marketing instrument.”⁸¹

Although Enzensberger noted that writers themselves were in “no position” to alter the objective conditions that determined literature’s function, he urged authors to make their work “useful” for radical political projects.⁸² In particular, he called on writers to use their skills to improve the “political literacy of Germany,” citing the radical columns, journalism, and polemics of several authors like Günther Wallraff, Bahman Nirumand, and Ulrike Meinhof as potential

⁷⁸ Enzensberger, “Commonplaces Concerning the Newest Literature,” 86–87.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁸¹ Quoted in Günter Grass, “Eine Generation Zuviel,” *Die Zeit*, July 29, 1977.

⁸² Enzensberger, “Commonplaces Concerning the Newest Literature,” 92.

models.⁸³ The minimal effect such writing had had on society up until that, he explained, was traceable not to any lack of talent or commitment of the authors, but to the continued reliance of writers on the “traditional means” of the consciousness industry. Enzensberger demanded a fundamental rethinking of the writer’s relation to literary craft. Only by working outside existing relations of production could an artist “achieve what was denied to him while he sought to make art: that the utilitarian value of his work outgrows its market value.” Enzensberger’s argument invoked Benjamin’s thoughts on the appropriating ability of the consciousness industry discussed in “The Author as Producer.” Yet Enzensberger maintained that in the decades since Benjamin’s essay, “the capacity of the capitalist society to reabsorb, suck up, swallow ‘cultural goods’ of widely varying digestibility has enormously increased.”⁸⁴ This left a situation wherein the claims of art to have a “utopian surplus” had “shriveled to mere appearance.”⁸⁵

The very distinction Enzensberger drew between the market value of art and its usefulness for political projects corresponds roughly to the schema of Benjamin’s own argument and the dialectical character of the commodity. Yet Enzensberger posited the relation of use-value to exchange-value as inverse rather than dialectical. In a market-based society where the principle of exchange had outstripped the utility of any particular commodity, to privilege the usefulness of art seemed to require refuting art’s usefulness for exchange. While this method allowed Enzensberger to critique the disintegration of art’s “utopian surplus,” how might his undialectical valorization of use-value have distracted from the task of giving to art a character that was not bound to exchange? In other words, how did the focus on use-value in New Left aesthetics obscure consideration of how even revolutionarily useful art contributed to the circulation of capital and the persistence of capitalist relations? How did the particular refusal of exchange imply a refusal of abstraction more generally, and thus the utopian potential bound up in it?

⁸³ Ibid., 93.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 90.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 91.

***Das Floß der Medusa* and the Unmasking of the Consciousness Industry**

In a follow-up to “Art as a Commodity in the Consciousness Industry” published in *Die Zeit* three weeks later, Kultur und Revolution readily acknowledged that their article had itself been functionally transformed by the consciousness industry. But rather than be a cause for discouragement, they suggested the circulation of their piece had evidenced the appropriating capacities of the consciousness industry. Moreover, they presented this as an opportunity to sketch out a method for intervening into the consciousness industry itself: “first set the apparatus in motion and then let it unmask itself.”⁸⁶ According to Kultur und Revolution, both the refuncting of their article and the virulent responses it received made clear the operations of the consciousness industry and the interests it supported. As a further example of their recommended method, the group lauded a recent musical performance of Hans Werner Henze’s *Das Floß der Medusa* (The Raft of the Medusa), or more specifically the controversies that surrounded it.

Das Floß der Medusa premiered in Hamburg on December 9, 1968. The oratorio was composed by Hans Werner Henze and written by Ernst Schnabel. Although Schnabel’s libretto was inspired by Théodor Géricault’s *Le Radeau de la Medusa*, the pair conceived of the oratorio as an allegorical requiem for Che Guevara, to whom the piece was dedicated. Henze claimed *Das Floß der Medusa* was about “the dramatic death throes and struggle for survival of a group of Third World people that have been abandoned to their fate [...] by representatives of a heartless and thoughtless ruling class.”⁸⁷ These politically engaged choices were striking, not the least because *Das Floß der Medusa* had been commissioned by Norddeutsche Rundfunk (North German Radio, or NDR), a West German radio station overseen by American forces.

By December 1968, Henze had emerged as a divisive figure in West Germany. Earlier that fall, the internationally renowned composer raised eyebrows with his public criticism of the newly built Kunsthalle in Bielefeld, whose board of directors had paid Henze DM 50,000 to compose a piano concerto for the building’s October 1967 opening. Just weeks before the

⁸⁶ Kultur und Revolution, “Aktionen Statt Argumente,” *Die Zeit*, December 14, 1968.

⁸⁷ Hans Werner Henze, *Bohemian Fifths*; trans. Stewart Spencer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 229. Unless otherwise noted, details about Henze’s life and career are drawn from this source.

ceremony, however, Henze learned that the museum's namesake, Richard Kaselowsky, had been an active member of the Nazi party. Taken aback by this revelation, Henze published an editorial in *Bielefeld Presse* the day before the opening denouncing the board of directors for misleading him. The widely reprinted polemic famously concluded:

We do not need new museums, opera houses, and premieres. What we need is the realization of dreams. What we need is the abolition of men's domination over other men.

What we need is to change mankind, which is to say, what we need is the creation the creation off humanity's greatest work of art: the World Revolution.⁸⁸

Born in 1926 in Germany, Henze made a name for himself in the postwar period as one of the Federal Republic's most promising young composers. Together with his disinterest in new musical trends represented by the likes of Karlheinz Stockhausen and the International Society for New Music, Henze's dissatisfaction with the conservatism of West Germany's reconstruction led him to immigrate to Italy in 1953. The apoliticism that marked his early work receded in the mid-1960s when Henze became increasingly involved with the German New Left. Through Hans Magnus Enzensberger, he developed close friendships with several leaders of the West Berlin SDS beginning in the fall of 1967. As the turbulent events of 1967 and 1968 unfolded, Henze was swept up in the revolutionary fervor of the time. He took part in and helped organize several actions including the February 1968 Vietnam Congress in West Berlin. And after the attempted assassination of Dutschke, he hosted the student leader and his family in Italy where Dutschke underwent his convalescence in the summer months of 1968.

Despite Henze's active involvement in the German New Left, the politics of *Das Floß der Medusa* came under intense scrutiny the week before its premiere when a staff article in *Spiegel*, pointing to the conservatism of Henze's musical style and the oratorio's institutional conditions of production, asserted the only thing revolutionary about the oratorio was its dedication to Guevara. Henze had long been criticized in West Germany for shunning the stylistic innovations of his contemporaries. *Spiegel* took this as reason to mock the very idea that a composer whose "big revolution" in music had consisted in "reproducing the bourgeois ideal of

⁸⁸ Quoted in Theodore Ziolkowski, *Scandal on Stage: European Theater as Moral Trial* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 132. For more on the controversy, see "Ohne Oetker keine Feier," *Die Zeit*, October 4, 1968.

music” could produce an oratorio with the revolutionary intentions Henze claimed for it.⁸⁹ This presumed a relationship between aesthetic innovations and forms of radical politics, one that students critical of the experimental modernist trends of the Adenauer period would not easily accept. Nonetheless, the closest the music of *Das Floß der Medusa* came to articulating an explicit set of politics was the driving percussion of some moments, which Henze claimed was inspired by the German New Left’s favorite chant, “Ho-Ho, Ho-Chi-Minh!” But in no way could the work be understood as a return to the engaged modernist music of Hans Eisler or Kurt Weil championed by Brecht and Benjamin. The more substantive critique offered by *Spiegel* centered on not the form or style of the oratorio, but the discrepancy between its averred radicalness and its actual institutional conditions of possibility. NDR had paid Henze DM 80,000 for the composition, and the premiere was scheduled for the massive Hall B of Hamburg’s Planten un Blomen. “*Das Floß der Medusa* was commissioned by the establishment,” *Spiegel* declared simply, “and is bringing [Henze] a lot of money.”⁹⁰

Spiegel’s article caused a rift among New Left activists in their opinions of Henze’s piece, which demonstrated several inconsistencies undergirding New Left aesthetics more generally. As Schnabel later recalled, student activists in Hamburg initially took the *Spiegel* article as a call to arms against the performance.⁹¹ Outside the venue the evening of the premier, members of the *Arbeitskreis der Sozialistischen Musikstudenten* (Working Group of Socialist Music Students) in Hamburg staged a protest against Henze. They handed out fliers deriding the performance as a “ritual concert” whose bourgeois audience, state commission, and ostentatious surroundings negated any of the political content the work ostensibly had.⁹² Henze’s friends from New Left circles in West Berlin chose to look past these arguments. Instead, they took aim at the consciousness industry itself. The day of the premiere, for example, Rudi Dutschke published a trenchant defense of Henze in *Spiegel*. The article was sure to gain attention for the simple fact

⁸⁹ “Kindliches Entzücken,” *Spiegel*, December 2, 1968.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ernst Schnabel, *Floss Der Medea: Text Zum Oratorium Von H.W. Henze/ Zum Untergang Einer Urufführung* (Munich: Piper, 1969), 48.

⁹² The account of the controversy and disruption draws from the following sources unless otherwise noted: Rolf Augstein, “Apropos Henz,” *Spiegel*, December 16, 1968; Heinz Josef Herbort, “Konzertskandal in Hamburg,” *Die Zeit*, December 13, 1968; “Sie Bleibt,” *Spiegel*, December 16, 1968; Schnabel, *Floss Der Medea: Text Zum Oratorium Von H.W. Henze/ Zum Untergang Einer Urufführung*; Ziolkowski, *Scandal on Stage*.

that it was Dutschke's first public statement since the attempt on his life eight months earlier. In it, Dutschke disagreed that judgments of Henze's stylistic conservatism could be used to critique the politics of his music. Although Dutschke conceded that the institutional conditions of Henze's oratorio were anything but progressive, he validated the piece through reference to Henze's commitment to the German New Left: "Henze has worked for a long time in our collective camp of revolutionary and anti-authoritarian socialists fighting against the late-capitalist authoritarian state."⁹³ No stranger to the hostile press himself, Dutschke accused *Spiegel* of spreading "lies and half-truths" against Henze, claiming that the attack was revenge for Henze's attempt to "break out of the ruling institutions" to which *Spiegel* belonged. Any critical evaluation of *Spiegel*'s accusations against Henze as being "counterrevolutionary," Dutschke claimed, had to consider the "counterrevolutionary" interests "the *Spiegel*-machinery" served. "Who works where, for who, and for what?—Those are the basic questions," Dutschke declared.

Kultur und Revolution took Dutschke's defense a step by blaming NDR for "defanging [...] Henze's revolutionary intentions." In fliers handed out at the premiere, the group asserted, "This concert should have taken place before workers, now the bourgeoisie is the guest. The champions of class culture have knowingly hindered art from reaching its goal."⁹⁴ But by emphasizing Henze's "revolutionary intentions" and the "knowing" operations of NDR, Kultur und Revolution risked committing the sort of intentional fallacy Benjamin himself had warned against. They ignored the central argument of "The Author as Producer," that artist intentions and attitudes meant little without proper revolutionary technique. By absolving Henze of responsibility for the conditions in which his work was produced, they effectively refused the agency of artists in the production process. This allowed Dutsche and Kultur und Revolution to redirect criticism back at the very functioning of the consciousness industry, but it prevented substantive consideration of the role art could play beyond criticizing the consciousness industry.

The premiere of *Das Floß der Medusa* was a massive cultural event. Not only was the performance hall completely sold out, but NDR also planned to broadcast the performance live

⁹³ Rudi Dutschke, "'Es Kracht an Allen Ecken Und Enden': Brief Für Die Herren Der Anderen Seite," *Spiegel*, December 9, 1967, 185.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Herbort, "Konzertskandal in Hamburg."

throughout West Germany. The atmosphere before the show was tense. Competing camps of demonstrators handed out fliers outside, while plainclothes police stationed inside the theater sat among celebrities, activists, and the rest of the 1,060 people in attendance. Just as the audience took their seats for the performance's 8:00 PM start time, a student walked on stage and mounted a poster of Guevara to the conductor's podium. When an NDR employee quickly ripped it down, a group of students—among them members of Kultur und Revolution—stormed the stage. In addition to posting another portrait of Guevara to the podium, they hung red and black flags, as well as rival banners that read “Expropriate the Culture Industry” and “Revolutionary?”

Even though the demonstrators returned to their seats, NDR employees were unable to remove the banners and flags before Henze and the soloists took the stage. Instead of heeding orders from NDR officials to remove the flags, the composer raised his baton to begin the performance. Members of West Berlin's RIAS Chamber Choir (US-sponsored Radio In the American Sector) brought to Hamburg for the performance, however, refused to sing with the red flags hung on the stage. Some chanted, “Take away the flag” while others shouted, “We are artists, not politicians.” Over a house microphone, Henze firmly insisted, “The flag stays.” NDR employees grabbed the microphone from Henze and ordered the performers off the stage. As Henze argued with the choir backstage, students flooded the performance space to protect the banners, leading NDR to call in thirty riot police. In the tumult that ensued, six students were arrested. They were joined in custody by Schnabel, who was severely injured after being shoved through a glass door by officers during the tumult. Once the scene had calmed, Henze returned to the stage to berate NDR for deploying riot police. “I distance myself from the brutality,” he shouted before leading the remaining students in a chant of “Ho! Ho! Ho-Chi-Minh!” NDR had no choice but to cancel the performance.

The turbulent premiere caused a sensation. Over 100 newspaper and magazine articles weighed in on what Theodor Ziolkowski has described as “the most notorious scandal of German musical history from the second half of the twentieth century.”⁹⁵ A review in *Spiegel* disparaged the demonstrators as “delinquents” and “anarchists” and dismissed Henze's composition as a “tragicomic absurdity.”⁹⁶ In his commentary on the confrontation, *Spiegel's* founder Rudolf

⁹⁵ Ziolkowski, *Scandal on Stage*, 124.

⁹⁶ “Sie Bleibt.”

Augstein criticized students for wasting their energy attacking art institutions instead of targeting sites of supposedly real political significance.⁹⁷ Most other perspectives, however, applauded the disruption for challenging the feigned apolitical character of art institutions. Even fierce critics of Henze, like Heinz Josef Herbort, highlighted the contradiction between NDR's claims that it wanted to "depoliticize art" and the financial support it received from the United States. Against NDR's claims that police were called to ensure the "safety of workers, the audience, and valuable instruments," Herbort argued their deployment was as politically motivated as the students' decision to mount the flags.⁹⁸

The incident demonstrated almost as much about the complicated and contradictory views on art held by New Left activists as it did the workings of consciousness industry. In their reflection on the events published in *Die Zeit*, Kultur und Revolution expressed wonder at how easily the "red flag, only an externally symbolic expression of the aesthetic content of Henze's piece created chaos in the otherwise so splendidly organized cultural bureaucracy."⁹⁹ They celebrated the provocation for "unmasking" the function of West Germany's art institutions. NDR's strong-armed response to the student disruption "did us an invaluable service," Kultur und Revolution claimed. The "brutal intervention of the police" made tangible the lengths to which the "distribution apparatus" would go when threatened with "paralysis."¹⁰⁰ But was this the political horizon of art—to disrupt and unmask the consciousness industry? In celebrating the performance, Kultur und Revolution neglected to mention that despite the forced cancelation of the live performance, NDR still broadcasted the oratorio nationally as was originally planned. They used a recording drawn from a rehearsal earlier in the day. In addition to being useful for unmasking the consciousness industry, *Das Floß der Medusa* contributed to its continued functioning.

⁹⁷ Augstein, "Apropos Henz."

⁹⁸ Herbort, "Konzertskandal in Hamburg."

⁹⁹ Kultur und Revolution, "Aktionen Statt Argumente."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

“Berlin’s Left Fascists Greet Teddy the Classicist”

The recalcitrant emphasis on use-value in the German New Left was best exemplified in a 1969 essay in *Kursbuch* by Peter Schneider, then a member of Kultur und Revolution: “The cars that burned on the Paris barricades [in May 1968], show a first application of the car’s use-value under the conditions of late capitalism.”¹⁰¹ Schneider’s declaration epitomized the overly redemptive power activists attributed to the notion of use-value.

Perhaps no figure offered shrewder insight into the ambivalence of this undialectical perspective than Theodor Adorno. His refusal and critique of the New Left in *Aesthetic Theory* was not just a footnote to his work; it was in line with his philosophical position in debates on aesthetics that stretched back to at least the 1930s. Given the New Left’s embrace of Benjamin, it seems only appropriate that Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility” was the occasion for Adorno’s earliest dismissal of function and use-value in art. In a famous letter to Benjamin in 1935, Adorno disapproved of the emphasis Benjamin had come to place on categories like use-value, immediacy, and restored function. Within capitalist society, Adorno claimed:

[...] the mere concept of use-value by no means suffices for a critique of the commodity character, but only leads back to a stage prior to the division of labour. This has always been my real reservation toward Brecht; his ‘collective’ and his unmediated concept of function have always been suspect to me, as themselves a ‘regression’.¹⁰²

Renewed emphasis on use-value and function, according to Adorno, could not lead theory and art beyond capitalism. It would not usher in a new type of social organization, but promised only to reestablish the conditions of possibility for capitalism and the commodity itself.

Adorno’s suspicion of art’s use-value and function reflected the ardent refusal of positivism that propels his entire social theory. Adorno articulated this position most thoroughly in *Negative Dialectics* (1966). Written thirty years after the “Hornberg Letter,” this book described late capitalist society as defined by the “universal domination of exchange value over

¹⁰¹ Peter Schneider, “Die Phantasie Im Spätkapitalismus Und Die Kulturrevolution,” *Kursbuch*, no. 16 (March 1969): 24.

¹⁰² Theodor W. Adorno, “Letter to Walter Benjamin, 2 August, 1935,” in *Aesthetics and Politics* (London; New York, NY: Verso, 2007), 114.

human beings.” In such a society, people are not defined qualitatively as subjects, but valued quantitatively as objects since subjectivity itself, Adorno claimed, had been degraded into a “mere object.”¹⁰³ Over twenty years earlier in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno, together with Max Horkheimer, examined how the theoretical subsumption of the particular under the universal in enlightened reason gave way to the instrumental rationality that defines the economic organization of modern capitalist society.¹⁰⁴ These cornerstone texts of Adorno’s social theory presented rational judgment as determined by the domination of exchange-value over use-value.

Despite the pernicious consequences Adorno claimed exchange-value’s subsumption of use-value yielded for humanity, he in no way applauded the appearance of use-value as a redemptive or radical possibility against exchange-value’s “universal domination.” Just as he remained resolutely wary of the appearance of the particular within capitalist society, Adorno mistrusted anything that would present itself as useful in a system “that has its eye directed towards profit.”¹⁰⁵ The usefulness of that which presents itself as useful could indeed be useful, Adorno argued, but not in a way that corresponded to the actual type of use-value Karl Marx had once described. In short, Adorno was not at all convinced by the “usefulness of the useful.”¹⁰⁶

For Marx, the use-value of a thing was determined by its utility, the meaningful use to which it can be put to satisfy a distinct want or need. When it came to commodities, use-value and exchange-value constitute the commodity’s double character, but are hardly commensurate to one another. Use-value, Marx famously explained, is distinct from exchange-value for the very fact that exchange-values “can only differ in quantity” whereas use-values differ also and “above all in quality.”¹⁰⁷ Marx saw the very condition of possibility and purpose of a commodity (ie. its value) as its potential to fulfill the need or want of a subject—without this potential, it would have no value and thus not be a commodity. Adorno’s view of society was far bleaker

¹⁰³ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Dennis Redmond, 2001, 111, <http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/ndtrans.html>. 111.

¹⁰⁴ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

¹⁰⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, “Culture and Administration,” in *The culture industry: selected essays on mass culture*, ed. J. M Bernstein (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 113.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁰⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1990), 128.

than any to be found in Marx for his belief that any capitalist society which degrades subjectivity “to a mere object” will produce commodities whose use-value does not satisfy human needs, but fulfills the objective of exchange.¹⁰⁸ The rational ends of production—i.e. producing things to meet the needs and wants of humanity—were supplanted by a fetishization of exchange itself. Even “pure use-value, whose illusion the cultural goods must preserve in a completely capitalist society” is replaced by “pure exchange-value.”¹⁰⁹ Adorno pointed to this most famously in his description of the value of listening to music as having nothing to do with “liking the concert” and everything to do with “buying the ticket.”¹¹⁰ Hence Adorno’s profound suspicion of that which would present itself as useful within capitalist society—it is useful only for the purposes of exchange. For Adorno, the appearance of something useful was never evidence of the existence of a particularity within the general of capitalist society.

Adorno’s most compelling example of this social schema was the culture industry. The rationale behind the culture industry itself was profit, which “is no different than the rationale of domination itself.”¹¹¹ Like any commodity in such a system, products of the culture industry are produced not to meet human needs, but to ensure exchange, that is, the circulation of capital itself. In the culture industry, use is completely subsumed beneath and operates for the purposes of exchange. The result, Adorno and Horkheimer claimed, was an entirely new form of insidious domination based not on physical coercion, but phantasmagoric deception.¹¹² Where the general reigns so completely, the particular cannot possibly exist—any claim to its existence within such a generalized society is explained by the fact that the culture industry thrives off “the false identity of the general and the particular.”¹¹³ Where Enzensberger’s theory of the consciousness industry held that something useful could in fact undermine it, for Adorno, the appearance of use-value in a cultural commodity was understood as nothing but further deception. This extended not just to the sphere of art, but to all sectors of society. Adorno’s discussion of value

¹⁰⁸ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 111.

¹⁰⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,” in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 39.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹¹¹ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 95.

¹¹² Theodor W. Adorno, “Culture Industry Reconsidered,” in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 106.

¹¹³ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 95.

anticipated in strong ways the value theory of Moishe Postone. The divisive political conclusions Postone has pinned to his theory of value aside, his central point remains logically convincing: the very existence of use-value as the dialectical counterpoint to the abstractness of exchange allows for the circulation of capital.¹¹⁴ Following Adorno, such logic can be mapped onto the “useful” contributions of the consciousness industry discussed thus far. Both *Kultur und Revolution*’s editorial and Henze’s oratorio were exemplary instances of “useful” works whose radial content contributed to the operation of the consciousness industry.

This hardly led Adorno to give up hope for art or aesthetics. Instead he called for art to become useless, the very antithesis of use-value in capitalism. Throughout his writings on aesthetics, Adorno reaffirmed the position that art should not satisfy distinct needs. The necessity of art, he wrote in *Aesthetic Theory*, “is its nonnecessity.”¹¹⁵ The very evaluation of art according to a standard like necessity “covertly prolongs the principle of exchange,” ie. “the philistine’s concern for what can be gotten for it.”¹¹⁶ While Adorno championed purposelessness as the purpose of art works, he was not so naive as to believe that works of art escape unscathed from the culture industry and commodity fetishism. He could argue that the “the useless occupies the place of that which can no longer be distorted by profit,” while also affirming that when mediated through the culture industry, all works of art see their purposelessness transformed into “purposelessness for purposes dictated by the market.”¹¹⁷ The purposes attributed to culture in capitalist society—entertainment and relaxation—makes it such that purpose finally consumes “the realm of the purposeless.” In an “antagonistic society,” the work of art is used by the culture industry to confirm “the very existence of the useless.” Yet in fulfilling the manufactured need of entertainment and relaxation, “the work of art defrauds human beings in advance of the liberation from the principle of utility which it is supposed to bring about.”¹¹⁸ As a result, only those works of art that maintain “abstractness, that irritating indeterminateness of what it is and

¹¹⁴ Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹¹⁵ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 251.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 113; Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 128.

¹¹⁸ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 128.

to what purpose it is” could resist “total subsumption under usefulness.”¹¹⁹ In Adorno’s schema, that such a work of art was difficult or even impossible to understand should not be faulted. Adorno lauded the immanent difficulties of art for the very fact that they were unsuitable to the easy consumption demanded by the culture industry. That this isolated the work of art from society making it not for anything other than itself was precisely the point. As Adorno wrote: Only what does not submit to that principle acts as the plenipotentiary of what is free from domination; only what is useless can stand in for the stunted use value. Artworks are plenipotentiaries of things that are no longer distorted by exchange, profit, and the false needs of a degraded humanity.¹²⁰

The very significance of art within a society thoroughly permeated by the exchange principle was that it have no use whatsoever for society. In essence, Adorno championed an art that was ahistorical in its effects, which, within a capitalist totality is the same as saying that he favored works of art—or at least a part of a work of art—that could in little way contribute to the direction of capitalist circulation. “Artworks that want to divest themselves of fetishism by real and extremely dubious political commitment” Adorno rejected for “blindly” subscribing to “shortsighted praxis.”¹²¹

The relation Adorno drew between art and political praxis was hardly accidental. On the one hand, he looked to evaluate art according to the same categories as political intervention. But the reverse also seems true. Adorno’s critique of use-value in art applied directly to political praxis. He believed that the shortsightedness of the New Left’s insistence on direct action, for example, did not allow activists to have critical perspective on the historical consequences of their actions. Within the totality of capitalism, all praxis had a historical effect, which would be not liberating but constitutive of the future circulation and reconfiguration of capital. Theoretically, Adorno’s critique of usefulness in praxis—in art as in political action—demands we consider at every point how even ostensibly radical practices contribute to existing and future forms of exploitation. While immensely productive as a critical method, this perspective is maddening for those interested in political engagement. It should be no surprise then that Adorno

¹¹⁹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 21. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 128.

¹²⁰ Adorno, *Aesthetic theory*, 227.

¹²¹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 227.

found himself in frequent conflict with the German New left on artistic as well as political matters. This dispute was staged most dramatically in West Berlin in the summer of 1967.

On July 7, 1967, Adorno was scheduled to deliver a lecture at the FU titled “On the Classicism of Goethe’s Iphigenie.” It became the first of many disruptions of his public talks and seminars by student activists over the next two years.¹²² The demonstration was in response to Adorno’s refusal two days earlier to appear in a West Berlin court as a defense expert in a trial against prominent student activists Fritz Teufel and Rainer Langhans.¹²³ Together with other members of their activist collective Kommune 1, the two students had distributed a series of four fliers in late May satirizing coverage in West Germany’s most popular newspaper, *Bild*, of a fire in a large Brussels department store that claimed the lives of over three hundred shoppers on May 22, 1967. Rather than directly lambast the *Bild*’s dubious connection of the fire to a series of Vietnam War protests in the Belgian capital, the Kommune 1 fliers satirically celebrated arson as an innovative form of protest. Although the militant rhetoric of the fliers lampooned the *Bild*’s insinuations about the Brussels fire, the judicial system wasted no time in charging Teufel and Langhans with conspiracy to incite violence. To prove the fliers were satire, the pair’s defense attorney Horst Mahler submitted the testimony of sixteen professors, artists, writers, and filmmakers. Just two days before Adorno’s talk, these experts disputed the prosecution’s accusations by attesting to the literary and artistic merit of the fliers, as well as their avant-gardist character. Adorno, however, was conspicuously absent from the panel, having declined Mahler’s invitation to prepare a brief.

Adorno’s refusal angered students. Fliers distributed before his lecture averred that Adorno had been a perfect choice to testify, not the least because Kommune 1 and the German New Left more generally owed much to Adorno’s own work:

The arson trial against Fritz Teufel documents the irrationalism of the judicial process that has been unleashed, and it can end with a student victory only if a network of testimony undermines even the most remotely rational arguments the court can produce. Professor Adorno was an ideal figure to produce such testimony, as he has propounded concepts like “the commodity character of culture,” “reification,” and “culture industry,”

¹²² An essay version of the lecture is published in Theodor W. Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003).

¹²³ On the fliers and the trial see Chapter Three of this dissertation.

a repertoire which his listeners are invited to share in sophisticated despair. But requests from colleagues and students were fruitless. Prof. Adorno would not condescend to interpret the Kommune's leaflet as a satirical expression of desperation. He refused to help.¹²⁴

On the one hand, this statement acknowledged the debt students owed to Adorno's social analysis discussed in previous chapters, particularly his critique of the colonization of daily life by the commodity. But Adorno's critics also claimed he could have at least testified to the weakness of the fliers as a political instrument. To many students, Adorno's refusal seemed a rebuff, a frustrating example of the practical inaction his totalizing theory implied. What use was such theory, they wondered, if it could only be used for critique?

In their coverage of the lecture, *Die Welt* reported how the "staged interventions tried every possible way to make the scholar look ridiculous."¹²⁵ As soon as Adorno took the podium, students unfurled sardonic banners that belittled his political detachment. They read: "Iphiginistes of the world, unite!" and "Berlin's Left Fascists Greet Teddy, the Classicist"—a reference to Jürgen Habermas' recent critique of the New Left. Throughout the talk, students outside banged on the doors of the auditorium while several inside issued catcalls. Near the lecture's end, one student, perhaps in a subtle nod to Adorno's emphasis on unintelligibility in art, interrupted Adorno by presenting him with red candies shaped like up bears, in a nod to his nickname 'Teddie'. Over the microphone, Adorno declared the disruption to be "an act of barbarity" before briskly leaving the room.

In his introduction to the talk, Peter Szondi, who had defended the Kommune 1 fliers in court, issued a trenchant appeal for students to show Adorno respect. He assured them that despite its elevated topic, Adorno's analysis of Goethe's *Iphigenie* would be anything but classicist. In short, he urged to students to consider the political character of Adorno's thought.¹²⁶ Although the intervention disrupted Adorno's lecture, the critique leveled by students targeted

¹²⁴ Flier reproduced in Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung : von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail : 1946-1995. I, Chronik* (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 255–256.

¹²⁵ "Gutachter," *Die Welt*, July 11, 1967. For other descriptions of the disruption, see "Adorno mit Zwischenfällen," Spiegel, July 9, 1967; Lorenz Jäger, *Adorno: A Political Biography*, trans. Stewart Spencer (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004), 198.

¹²⁶ Szondi's prefatory introductory remarks are printed in Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, 266–267.

not just what Adorno spoke on that day, but what he had refused to speak on two days earlier. Had Adorno joined the other “experts” in defending Teufel and Langhans, his lecture surely would not have elicited such outrage. Students were upset not at the aesthetic topic of his analysis, but his refusal to use his status as an aesthetic expertise to defend Teufel and Langhans.

Adorno’s snub was not reducible to any political opposition to the German New Left. Despite his well-known reservations toward the movement, Adorno actively engaged with and often spoke on behalf of politically active West German students. Just two days after his lecture, for example, he privately met with leading members of the West Berlin SDS for what he recalled was a highly productive discussion on the relation between theory and praxis.¹²⁷ His refusal to testify was due less to an unwillingness to defend the Kommunards than an aversion to defend the fliers on the aesthetic grounds championed by their lawyer.¹²⁸ As his thought on aesthetics suggests, Adorno was unwilling to support the German New Left’s “superstition” that “art could intervene directly or lead to an intervention.”¹²⁹ He was likely also even warier to use his aesthetic expertise for political ends to defend such clearly political documents as art. Understood in this way, Adorno’s refusal to testify corresponded to the ethics of his philosophical system based on negative dialectics and a refusal to instrumentalize knowledge for political ends. Moreover, it indexed a suspicion that the fliers were not artistic documents but “shortsighted praxis,” which a letter written to Max Horkheimer that June made plain. It was not that Adorno “would not condescend to interpret the Kommune’s leaflet as a satirical expression of desperation.” His decision not to testify exemplified his refusal to recognize art’s potential use for political ends. For activists, however, this seemed consistent with the complicity of high modernist art and thought with social domination.

¹²⁷ See the letters from Adorno reflecting on the event printed in *Ibid.*, 271.

¹²⁸ In a letter written to Max Horkheimer about the fliers dated May 31, 1967, Adorno criticizes Kommune 1 for “express[ing] solidarity with the people who set fire to the Brussels department store.” He writes that the Kommunard’s fliers had “truly crossed the line of what we should tolerate.” Early on, Adorno took it for granted that the fire was arson, only to learn later that the news reports were incorrect and the fliers satiric. See the letter dated May 31, 1967 printed in *Ibid.*, 233.

¹²⁹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 320.

The Institutional End of Theater

On the evening of May 23, 1968, the technical and design staff of the Munich Kammerspiele staged a ten-minute strike that brought performances on both of the theater's stages to a grinding halt. During the brief work stoppage, the actors who had been performing Peter Schaffers' one-act farce *Black Comedy* read to the audience a resolution denouncing the pending *Notstandsgesetze* (Emergency Laws), a controversial piece of national legislation that granted the executive branch the ability to suspend constitutional rights in times of national emergency.¹³⁰ Critics of the bill argued that, if passed, the laws would literally reconstitute the conditions of possibility for fascism: after all, it was through President Paul von Hindenburg's recourse to a similar set of exceptional powers granted in the Weimar constitution that Adolf Hitler 'democratically' consolidated his power in 1933.¹³¹ In addition to criticizing the *Notstandsgesetze*, the Munich performers called on theater ensembles throughout West Germany to transform their stages into sites of protest against the pending legislation. "To all colleagues at the theaters of the Federal Republic and West Berlin," the statement began:

Organize actions in your work places, and come up with ways to overcome any problems that may arise. The action possibilities range from the interruption of performances to strikes, from individual actions like distributing fliers to collaborating with other resistance groups—Lead the actions spontaneously and from below—Theater leadership and officials can be asked to show their solidarity. Above all, work with the players and technical staff of the strike-affected performances and build a sufficient basis for effective decision-making.¹³²

The call to action did not fall on deaf ears. Demonstrations, debates, and clashes with police disrupted business as usual at dozens of theaters across West Germany over the next week.¹³³

¹³⁰ On the *Notstandsgesetze* and the protests, see Michael Schneider, *Demokratie in Gefahr? Der Konflikt Um Die Notstandsgesetze* (Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1986); Michael Schmidtke, "Cultural Revolution or Cultural Shock? Student Radicalism and 1968 in Germany," *South Central Review*, no. 16 (2000): 77–89.

¹³¹ For example, see the flier "Warum streiken eure Westdeutschen Kollegen gegen die NO TSTANDSGESETZE?" distributed by the Aktionskomitee der Arbeiter, Schüler und Studenten an der TU, located in Landesarchivberlin, F Rep 240, Acc 1701, Karton 317, Id. 1001-X, "VI Anti-Springer Kampagne—Frühjahr 1968," Document 6.

¹³² "München Kammerspiele: Aufruf an die Kollegin," *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, June 1, 1968, 12.

¹³³ Details for these disruptions can be found in: Agnes Hüfner, "Demokratisierung Des Theaters," *Kürbiskern* 3, no. 4 (1969): 500–508; Dorothea Kraus, *Theater-Protteste zur Politisierung von Strasse und Bühne in den 1960er*

The theater protests emerged as part of the nationwide *Antinotstandsbewegung* (Movement against the State of Emergency), which drew broad support from students, labor unions, and the West German public. The well-organized coalition reached its peak during the final parliamentary deliberations on the bill in May 1968. That month, activists employed a diversity of tactics to agitate against the legislation. These included wildcat strikes, classroom walkouts, university occupations, sit-ins of government buildings, and massive public marches.¹³⁴

Antinotstand actions at West German theaters were most often led by ensemble and staff members against the will of theater administrations—though there were several exceptions. On May 27 in Frankfurt am Main, for example, audiences arriving to the Städtische Bühnen were welcomed by a bulletin board that read, “Action Plan for the Emergency Demonstrations on our Stages for Monday the 27th of May, 1968.” The sign informed audiences that interruptions were planned for that evening’s ballet, opera, and theater performances:

During all three actions, the audience will be advised that a discussion on the problems of the *Notstandsgesetze* will take place in connection with the performance of the ‘Viet Nam Diskurs’. The start time of this discussion will be approximately 22:30, about ten minutes after the performance’s end.¹³⁵

During the intermission of each performance, the theater’s artistic director Harry Buckwitz together with dozens of ensemble members took the stage bearing a banner that declared, “We are defending ourselves against the restriction of basic rights.” Buckwitz would then read a declaration, decrying the *Notstandsgesetze* as a “threat to our democratic order” and vowing the ensemble’s commitment “to do everything to ensure that these dangerous laws can never be used

Jahren (Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 2007), 134–141; “Die demolierte Aura oder Was hält das Theater alles aus,” *Theater Heute* (July 1968), 1-3; Heinz Friedrich, “Heilsame Negation des Theaters,” *NZZ*, May 25, 1968; “Politische Aktionen im Theater: Eine Dokumentation der Demonstrationen,” *Die Deutsche Bühne* 7/8, 1968, 138-140; “Geschlossene Gesellschaft,” *Spiegel*, June 3, 1968, 21-24.

¹³⁴ On May 11, 1968 alone, 60,000 activists descended on the West German capital of Bonn for a massive march and demonstration that temporarily shut the city down. See Thomas, *Protest movements in 1960s West Germany*, 87–93; Gerhard Bauss, *Die Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und Westberlin* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977), 112–166; Maren Krohn, *Die Gesellschaftliche Auseinandersetzung Um Die Notstandsgesetze* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1981).

¹³⁵ Quoted in “Die demolierte Aura oder Was hält das Theater alles aus,” 2.

as an instrument of oppression.”¹³⁶

While most of the protests were led by staff and ensemble members, outside groups stormed a number of theaters, often provoking strong-armed responses from police. Between May 27 and May 29, performances in eight cities were interrupted or cancelled following stage occupations by student activists who demanded public discussions of the *Notstandsgesetze*. The most dramatic of these disruptions unfolded at the Schiller Theater in West Berlin on May 28, the eve of final parliamentary debates on the legislation. During a production of Feydeaus Schwank’s *Der Floh im Ohr*, hundreds of students hoping to stage a sit-in at the theater clashed with riot police, resulting in several serious injuries. Once police gained control of the theater, demonstrators bombarded the building’s glass facade with stones.¹³⁷

Arguably the most active ensemble was Munich’s Kammerspiele. Following their mobilization call on May 23, the theater’s *Antinotstandskomitee* (Anti-State of Emergency Committee) again disrupted performances on May 25 to host a discussion with the audience about the pending legislation. In an effort to assuage the ensemble and prevent future interruptions, the Kammerspiele’s artistic director, August Everding, agreed to permit public discussions about the *Notstandsgesetze* at the end of each night. The city of Munich, however, quickly passed legislation prohibiting such discussions inside its publicly funded theaters. To protest this ban, five hundred demonstrators showed up to the Kammerspiele on May 27 to force a discussion of the legislation within the theater.¹³⁸

For many, the *Notstandsgesetze* typified the lack of liberalism in the West German state. Debate on the legislation had been left to parliament, without consideration of popular opinion. The *Notstandsgesetze* had been a matter of controversy for years, but it was not until the Grand Coalition of the SPD and CDU that the laws could finally be pushed through. Understood in such a context, the disruptions of the theater appeared as an extension of the massive protests, functioning as a critique of the laws and the process by which they were to be ratified. But the protests also evinced a desire for critical-rational debate in their attempts hold discussions within public institutions.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

While the *Antinotstandsbewegung* did not prevent the passage of the *Notstandsgesetze*, many praised the demonstrations within the theaters as “the actualization and development of the theater as a forum.”¹³⁹ Some welcomed the protests for discovering “a new space of action” in an “institution, which night after night is used to spread a reactionary ideology.”¹⁴⁰ Such perspectives drew a line between the existing function of the theater and the potential for theater to be a space for substantive public discussion to be had on the most pressing political issue of the day. Since its postwar founding, the West German theater system had been guided by a principle that “stagings stayed true to the literary work” and avoid contemporary issues, as articulated in an influential 1948 speech to West Germany’s chief artistic directors by Gustaf Gründgens, then-Vice President of the *Deutsche Bühnenverein* (Union of German Theaters).¹⁴¹ David Barnett has argued that such sentiment became the de facto vision of West German theater in the 1950s and 1960s, one that was “in harmony with the concept of the theatre’s function in the post-war years [...] of bringing the muse to a mainly middle-class audience.”¹⁴² The attempt to transform German theaters into spaces for political discussion led the German theater journal *Theater Heute* to describe the *Antinotstandsgesetze* demonstrations as, “putting theater itself into question.”¹⁴³ The repressive force and bans these interventions met up against suggested the stakes of such a challenge, not to mention the significance that art institutions played in maintaining established political and economic orders.

Government officials averred that attempts to refunction the theater for the purposes of critical-rational debate not only violated the theater’s social purpose, but threatened its very existence. Emblematic of this position was the defense Herbert Hohenemser, Munich’s Chief Cultural Advisor, provided for the city’s interdiction against discussions on the *Notstandsgesetze* inside its public theaters. First published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on May 28, 1968 and circulated widely, Hohenemser’s statement expressly couched his defense in functional terms,

¹³⁹ Erasmus Schöffler, “Öffnung Des Theaters Für Die Demokratie,” *Theater Heute* (July 1968): 3; Botho Straus, “Versuch, Ästhetische Und Politische Ereignisse Zusammenzudenken: Neues Theater 1967-1970,” *Theater Heute* (October 1970): 62.

¹⁴⁰ Hüfner, “Demokratisierung Des Theaters,” 502.

¹⁴¹ Gründgens quoted in David Barnett, *Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the German theatre* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 15.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Quoted in Kraus, *Theater-Protteste*, 136.

arguing that the “demonstrative function” some activists and artists desired the theater to perform was at odds with the theater’s institutional mission, namely “the transformation of human consciousness” through “homeopathic means.”¹⁴⁴ Echoing Gründgens from two decades earlier, Hohenemser maintained that theater as an art and institution should be “in the service of literature.” When used to demonstrate for contemporary political issues, it neared a state of crisis for the simple fact that “everyday politics” knows little of literature’s “deep political effects.” To disrupt a performance of a Brecht play with a political demonstration, Hohenemser insisted, “is not only counterproductive, but also preposterous since the writer Bert Brecht was the most meaningful demonstrator of this century, but in a higher sense.” By a “higher sense,” Hohenemser invoked a sense of politics that transcended the realm of the everyday and operated on a level of timeless ethics and morals. Instead of haranguing audiences or championing particular causes, the theater in Hohenemser’s view should be a space for cultivating general attitudes and behaviors. The presence of “everyday politics” on the stage, he declared, was a “catastrophe” that risked the “destruction” of the theater.

Yet the considerations that informed Hohenemser’s position were grounded less in aesthetic taste than institutional priorities. German theater historian Dorothea Kraus has gone so far as to describe the *Antinotstand* actions within the theater as “directed first and foremost at the use of theater buildings as a public space.” She argues that the interventions “interrogated the social function of the theater not on aesthetic, rather on institutional levels.”¹⁴⁵ When Hohenemser spoke of theater’s destruction, Munich’s leading cultural official specifically referred to the consequences that actions like in-house demonstrations could have on a theater’s budget. “The word destruction is not farfetched,” he warned, for a theater that “no longer plays theater” but “uses the stage or podium [...] to demonstrate for unwished for politics.” His article forcefully reminded readers of the “powers within parliament who are just waiting for a reason” to cut theater subsidies. According to Hohenemser, a theater that did not fulfill the function for which it was funded risked “falsifying itself as an institution.” The survival of the theater depended on continued government funding, which itself was conditional on the theater performing the function expected of it by government officials. To challenge this function by

¹⁴⁴ Herbert Hohenemser, “Die Wahren Demonstrationen,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 28, 1968.

¹⁴⁵ Kraus, *Theater-Protteste*, 141.

engaging everyday politics on the stage, Hohenemser made clear, put the theater's material existence at risk. His article revealed much about the material and institutional pressures that shaped cultural policy in West Germany. It suggested overlap between the interests pushing for the passage of the *Notstandsgesetze* and those governing the social function of West Germany art institutions. This apparent confluence seemed to many proof of art's institutional complicity with social domination.

In some ways, Hohenemser's recommendations affirmed the high modernist sensibility that looked askance at art's immediate ties to prevailing political issues. Like Adorno, Hohenemser championed a disengaged art. Both claimed that activist attempts to use art institutions for their own political purposes threatened the very existence of these institutions and, by extension, art itself. The shared judgment revealed an unlikely proximity between cultural administrators and critics of cultural administration in late 1960s West Germany. To take this conjuncture seriously is, on the one hand, to acknowledge the philosophical underpinnings of Hohenemser's perspective. At the same time, it also raises questions regarding the alignment of institutional and philosophical positions. Without stretching this point too thin, we should consider how this overlap points to a shared concern in New Left aesthetics and politics: the function of culture and art, just like the function of public debate, had become the domain not of the masses but of experts and political elites. What matters here is the sentiment that high modernist art and theory, like administrative operations, seemed to preclude the types of critical-rational debate necessary for developing self-determined collective experience.

Proletarian Experience

The May 1968 disruptions of theaters were engineered to both protest and facilitate discussion on the *Notstandsgesetze*. Already in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* Jürgen Habermas anticipated the frustrations that erupted over passage of the legislation when he described the consequence of the disintegrated public sphere for the legal foundation of liberalism as the breakdown of “the connection between rational-critical public debate and the legislative foundation of domination.”¹⁴⁶ For Habermas, the very basis of the “liberal concept of

¹⁴⁶ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 178.

legal the norm” rested on a Kantian concept of “universality and truth.” This truth could only be “guaranteed” so long as the law-making parliament assumed the character and function of a public sphere within the realm of the state, thus making it “possible to discover, through public discussion, what was practically necessary in the general interest.” Even before the *Notstandsgesetze*, Habermas could argue that parliament’s character as a public sphere had collapsed on account of the influence of special interests. This had severe consequences, not the least of which was that it transformed what even qualified as a law:

The altered structure of the law brings out the fact that the task of providing a rational justification for political domination can no longer be expected from the principle of publicity. To be sure, within an immensely expanded sphere of publicity the mediatized public is called upon more frequently and in incomparably more diverse ways for the purposes of public acclamation; at the same time it is so remote from the processes of the exercise and equilibrium of power that their rational justification can scarcely be demanded, let alone be accomplished any longer, by the principle of publicity.¹⁴⁷

Habermas portrayed legal domination as operating through the exercise of “non-public opinion,” which gave rise a situation wherein “[c]ritical publicity is supplanted by manipulative publicity.”¹⁴⁸ The degraded public sphere, according to this view, not only manipulated public opinion, it compromised the very legal foundations of liberal society itself.

The concerns many shared over the *Notstandsgesetze* boiled down to the growing gap between legal domination and the public sphere. The demand for public debate of the legislation seemed to have aspirations for restoring the public sphere. As the Frankfurt School sociologist Oskar Negt and filmmaker Alexander Kluge argued in 1972:

The students strove for a fulfillment of the substantive content of a bourgeois-liberal idea of a public sphere by demonstratively forcing discussions. They wanted to bring experience, contexts of living, the historical present (Vietnam, the liberation movements in the Third World, their real experience as students) into a context of public discussion that was blocked by the formal public sphere. Communication and discussion were not

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 180.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 178.

the intention and function of the decaying public spheres of such institutions.¹⁴⁹ Yet by associating student interventions with the “bourgeois-liberal idea of a public sphere,” Negt and Kluge critiqued rather than valorized the New Left approach.¹⁵⁰ For Negt and Kluge, the very concept of the liberal-bourgeois public sphere is predicated on an abstract principle of generalization that works to eliminate or exclude any and all forms of particularity. This makes the bourgeois public sphere well suited to the forms of social domination required by the capitalist market, especially the administration of social experience. Yet rather than dismiss the idea of a public sphere altogether, Negt and Kluge posited the need for a public of an entirely different character. The proletarian public sphere, as they called it, is to be self-determined, organized by neither the interests of profit nor the exclusionary dynamics of high culture. While seemingly anachronistic, the term “proletarian” did not refer to the labor movement or even workers exclusively. Instead, the designation indicated the proletarian public sphere’s inclusion of all those who were the subject of alienated labor and life. As Miriam Hansen writes, for Negt and Kluge proletarian “is a category of negation in both a critical and utopian sense, referring to the fragmentation of human labor and existence and its dialectical opposite, the practical negation of existing conditions in their totality.”¹⁵¹ In short, the proletarian public sphere was to be a space for the organization of experience beyond existing capitalist relations.

Negt and Kluge dedicated *Public Sphere and Experience* to their mentor Adorno. The type of experience they championed resonated with the experiential power of negation Adorno had located in “authentic” works of art. Experience describes an ability, as Hansen explains, “of having and reflecting upon experience, of seeing connections and relations, of juggling reality and phantasy, of remembering the past and imagining a different future.” It is, in other words, “the matrix that mediates individual perception and social horizons of meaning, including the collective experience of alienation, isolation, and privatization.”¹⁵² The collective emphasis Negt

¹⁴⁹ Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyo and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 84.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Miriam Hansen, “Unstable Mixtures, Dilated Spheres: Negt and Kluge’s *The Public Sphere and Experience*, Twenty Years Later,” *Public Culture* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1993): 202.

¹⁵² Ibid., 188.

and Kluge placed on experience signaled a clear break with Adorno, who having endured the types of mass culture promulgated by Nazism and monopoly capitalism judged collectivity to be false and homogenizing. This led Adorno to privilege the highly individualized viewing, reading, and listening experience of art itself. Like Walter Benjamin and Hans Magnus Enzensberger before them, Negt and Kluge believed that historical developments in technology could generate new forms of collective experience that were neither necessarily exploitative nor manipulative, but which could facilitate a collective space wherein experience was self-determined rather than administered.

Negt and Kluge argued that the German New Left's attacks on the consciousness industry looked to restore rather than sublimate the bourgeois public sphere. But rather than interrogate this claim, the material presented in this chapter allows me to conclude by briefly considering the impact of New Left interventions on the possibility for collective experience of the sort implied by the proletarian public sphere. As we have seen, the German New Left set itself against the highly individualized and seemingly elitist experiences prized by the likes of Adorno. Considering their selective embrace of Benjamin, this would seem to suggest that what they sought was a more collective and egalitarian form of social organization akin to what Negt and Kluge later described. But how did the New Left's attacks on high art target not only intellectual domination and elitism, but also the utopian potential of experience bound up in it? Of what consequence was their recalcitrant emphasis on use-value for delegitimizing the sense of experience to be found in abstraction? In other words, how did the ends in New Left aesthetics anticipate the sought after collapse of high culture, but at the expense of the abstraction necessary for the collective development of experience against its total administration?

Writing in 1972, Herbert Marcuse posited just such a scenario in his description of the "cultural revolution" aspired to by students. While he agreed with the New Left that older forms of classical bourgeois culture had become outdated, he attributed this to "the dynamic of monopoly capitalism which made [bourgeois] culture incompatible with the requirements of its survival and growth."¹⁵³ If it were the case that the "disintegration of bourgeois culture" was a symptom of the need to adjust "culture to the requirements of contemporary capitalism," how might attacks on high art, he asked, amount simply to:

¹⁵³ Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 84.

[...] falling in line with capitalist adjustment and redefinition of culture? Is it not thus defeating its own purpose, namely, to prepare the soil for a qualitatively different, a radically anticapitalist culture? Is there not a dangerous divergence, if not contradiction, between the political goals of the rebellion and its cultural theory and praxis?¹⁵⁴

With the emergence of postmodernity, history proved Marcuse's thesis true. But it is crucial to keep in mind that his critique of the New Left was conditioned by a continued faith in what he termed "the miracle of the aesthetic form," not the desire to discover new opportunities for experience in the transformed cultural terrain brought on by history.¹⁵⁵ Having engaged students throughout the 1960s, Marcuse conceded the elitism of aesthetic experience as "available and even meaningful only to a privileged minority." But he defended his position with the ahistorical claim that naturalized elitism as the character that art "shares with all culture since antiquity."¹⁵⁶ While we might do well to critique the New Left's disregard for the type of experience implied by high art, such a critical position would itself be short-sighted if we followed Marcuse and Adorno and did not struggle after the opportunities for new forms of experience that history presents before us.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 85.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 90.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 91.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Long March through the Theaters: *Viet Nam Diskurs* and the Alibi of Resistance

“The theater as a social institution strikes me as a useless instrument for the transformation of social institutions.”

—Peter Handke

By all accounts, the world premiere of Peter Weiss’ *Viet Nam Diskurs* on March 20, 1968 at the lavish Frankfurter Schauspielhaus was a “grand evening of theater.”¹ Not only was the play authored by one of the German-speaking world’s most acclaimed dramatists, but the staging was the last in the career of renowned director Harry Buckwitz. The theater—at which Buckwitz also served as artistic director—was completely sold-out. Two hundred seats had been reserved for a veritable army of journalists and critics who traveled to Frankfurt am Main from all over the world eager to report on the “theater event of season.”²

Also on hand were two battalions of riot police, stationed outside the theater with metal barricades. The sixty officers stood ready to assist a dozen more plainclothes police posted throughout the packed house.³ Concerns that antiwar activists might disrupt the premiere had prompted these exceptional measures. Particularly worrisome for Buckwitz and city officials were the some 250 students who had purchased seats in the upper balcony. Considering the play’s condemnation of the war, a journalist from the popular weekly news magazine, *Spiegel*, described the police presence as intended to “prevent a paradox,” that of “left powers” disrupting a “leftist play.”⁴

Despite a few instances of booming but quickly passing chants, the nearly three-hour performance proceeded as planned. But before cast members could take their curtain call, dozens of students stormed the stage chanting, “Ho-Ho! Ho-Chi-Minh!” and unfurling flags of the

¹ Hellmut Karasek, “Polemische Dokumentation,” *Theater Heute* (May 1968): 58. Weiss’ play has been translated into English as *Discourse on Vietnam*. See Peter Weiss, *Discourse on Vietnam*, trans. Geoffrey Skelton (London: Calder and Boyers, 1971).

² Hans Wetter, “Agitation für die Revolution: In Frankfurt wurde der ‘Viet Nam Diskurs’ von Peter Weiss uraufgeführt,” transcript of a Deutsche Welle Broadcast on March 21, 1968. Harry Buckwitz Archiv, Akademie der Künste (hereafter abbreviated as AdK-HBA), Folder 129.

³ On these events, see, “Dollars für Ho,” *Spiegel*, March 25, 1968, 181-82; “So erschreien sie sich das große Alibi,” *Münchener Merkur*, March 22, 1968, 8. AdK-HBA, Folder 129. Hellmuth Karasek, “Vietnam auf der Bühne: Notwendig und problematisch,” *Stuttgarter Zeitung*. AdK-HBA, Folder 129; Dorothea Kraus, *Theater-Protteste: Zur Politisierung von Straße und Bühne in den 1960er Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2007), 143-145; Andre Müller, “Neuartiges politisches Theater” *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, April 5, 1968. AdK-HBA, Folder 129; Henning Rischbieter, “Spielformen des politischen Theaters,” *Theater Heute* (April 1968): 8-12; Günther Rühle, “Der lange Feldzug des Peter Weiss,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 22, 1968. AdK-HBA, Folder 129; Bruno Scharer, “Vietnam und die Aesthetik,” *Die Weltwoche*, March 29, 1968. AdK-HBA, Folder 129; Wolfram Schütte, “Abstraktionen,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, March 22, 1968.

⁴ “Dollars für Ho,” 181.

Vietnamese National Liberation Front.⁵ Instead of applause for the production, demonstrators called for a public discussion of West German involvement in the Vietnam War. Together with Buckwitz and Weiss, much of the audience stayed for an impromptu forum, which lasted until midnight and was moderated by the noted German sociologist Jürgen Habermas.

In the ensuing discussion, antiwar activists charged the production with being an “alibi” for Frankfurt’s city government.⁶ Recent protests in the city against the war had been met with repressive force. A month earlier, found hundred officers and two water cannons had been deployed to quell what Frankfurt’s police chief later labeled the city’s “most aggressive demonstration” since World War II.⁷ Activists at the premiere claimed that the government subsidized performance of *Viet Nam Diskurs* did more to smooth over these and other instances of repression by evidencing the state’s democratic tolerance of free speech than it did to support the liberation struggle in Vietnam.⁸

In his influential 1965 essay, “Repressive Tolerance,” Herbert Marcuse warned that, in a late liberal society, “even progressive movements threaten to turn into their opposite” when they “accept the rules of the game.”⁹ According to the Frankfurt School social theorist, the “exercise of political rights” like voting, writing letters to the press and to politicians, and even protesting publicly could bolster rather than contest the given administration of society “by testifying to the existence of democratic liberties.” Marcuse concluded that in such instances “freedom (of opinion, of assembly, of speech) becomes an instrument for absolving servitude.”¹⁰ Although highly administered liberal states tolerated the opinions of even “radical enemies of society,” such tolerance did not “promote” qualitative change, but was used to “contain” it.¹¹

Written while Marcuse was living in the United States, “Repressive Tolerance” resonated with the worldview of antiauthoritarian activists in 1960s West Germany. There it became a foundational text for New Left critiques of both liberal society and the prevailing approach to antiwar organizing, which carefully respected the legal limits to free speech and assembly. The accusations made against the Frankfurt production of *Viet Nam Diskurs* followed the logic set by Marcuse’s critique of repressive tolerance. The activist intervention made manifest inside the theater the tensions then simmering within the West German antiwar movement generally. For theater historians today, this incident raises questions about not only the limits of political plays, but also the indirect ways theater itself can be complicit with domination. In the spring of 1968, it accompanied the start of a vigorous debate about the West German theater system that would shape an entire generation of theatrical production.

⁵ The students were mostly members of the German Socialist Students League (SDS) and the Independent Socialist High School Student Association. Kraus, *Theater-Proteste*, 143.

⁶ “So erschreien sie sich das große Alibi,” 8.

⁷ Quoted in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung. Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995: Chronik*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 296.

⁸ “So erschreien sie sich das große Alibi,” 8.

⁹ Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance,” in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (New York: Beacon Press, 1969), 83.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

In its first issue following the premiere, West Germany's leading theater periodical, *Theater Heute*, ran several features on *Viet Nam Diskurs*, including a review, a look into the rehearsal process, and a diatribe by Peter Handke on why the theater was unfit for protest.¹² Prefacing the entire issue was a polemic by two young West German actors, Barbara Sichtermann and Jens Johler, titled "On the Authoritarian Spirit of the German Theater." While the pair did not mention Weiss' play by name, their missive spoke directly to concerns raised by the Frankfurt production. "Revolutionary plays," they argued, "will inevitably be defused to compulsory exercises through outdated work-methods. The only external effect that the theater can make corresponds to its inner reality."¹³ At the time, theaters in West Germany received generous subsidies, but their institutional structures granted near total authority to state-appointed *Intendanten* (artistic directors). But instead of laying blame on a "crisis of leadership," Sichtermann and Johler attributed the flaws of a production like *Viet Nam Diskurs* to the "feudalistic essence" and "hierarchical structure" of the West German theater system.¹ They argued that more congenial bosses "cannot replace what the theater needs to create living, interesting products: dialogue among all those involved in the work-process." The pair pointedly asked, "How can the theater be a discussion partner of society if discussion within the society of theater itself does not take place?"¹⁴

Sichtermann and Johler's article occasioned a flurry of responses, several of which criticized the young actors for allowing concern for structures of authority to overshadow the determinist character of the theater's existing funding structures. But doing away with subsidies, Sichtermann and Johler contended, would mean integrating "the theater into the free market economy," a path they found particularly unappealing. Instead, the pair recommended using the privileged situation that subsidies afforded the theater system to transform theaters from within.¹⁵ In short, they called for democratizing production relations guided by the principle of *Mitbestimmung* (codetermination). Long a vaunted term in debates over industrial labor reform in postwar West Germany, *Mitbestimmung* ostensibly aimed at granting workers equal say as their employers over the direction of businesses. As envisioned by Sichtermann and Johler, *Mitbestimmung* in the theater entailed decentralizing all decision-making processes while redistributing power among all workers, from directors to technicians. However utopic their proposal seemed, it inaugurated what German theater historian Dorothea Kraus has described as, "the first phase of the debate over forms of organization and work conditions in the public theater."¹⁶ At the end of 1968, *Theater Heute* proclaimed *Mitbestimmung*, "undoubtedly the topic of the year in the theater."¹⁷ And within just two years, experiments with *Mitbestimmungstheater* emerged as a major theater movement in West Germany.

¹² Peter Handke, "Straßen-Theater und Theater-Theater," *Theater Heute* (April 1968).

¹³ Barbara Sichtermann and Jens Johler, "Über den autoritären Geist des deutschen Theaters," *Theater Heute* (April 1968): 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3

¹⁶ Kraus, *Theater-Protteste*, 307.

¹⁷ "Theater under Revolte," *Theater Heute Jahrbuch* (1968): 25.

This chapter contributes to recent scholarship that documents the history and legacy of the *Mitbestimmungstheater* by examining how the initial calls for *Mitbestimmung* emerged out of concern for the theater's complicity with regimes of repression.¹⁸ I approach this topic through careful consideration of Peter Weiss' *Viet Nam Diskurs*, particularly the Frankfurt premiere as well as two subsequent productions co-directed by Peter Stein and Wolfgang Schwiedzrik, which yielded the first experiments in *Mitbestimmungstheater*. My focus on *Viet Nam Diskurs* offers the opportunity to consider the divergent ways theater was thought to be able to engage society at an exceptionally turbulent moment in the postwar period.

On something of a different register, this chapter also tracks competing approaches to antiwar organizing in the years between 1965 and 1968. I do so by situating the theater practices under consideration against the backdrop of the West German antiwar movement with the aim of analyzing how the diverse criticisms leveled at *Viet Nam Diskurs* indexed heated ongoing debates among activists. Such a confluence leads me to take seriously the play's different iterations as activist interventions in their own right. This is not meant to aestheticize activism against the Vietnam War, nor am I necessarily looking to valorize theater practices politically. My purposes here are more methodological than polemical in that I subject theater to the same type of critical interrogation as activist practices. What can Marcuse's critique of repressive tolerance reveal about the political horizons of even the most radically militant theatrical productions? And how might theater be useful for identifying gaps in Marcuse's influential account of late liberal society? Taking theater as my site of inquiry, the first half of this chapter explores, following Marcuse, how civil forms of protest can function as "alibis" for repression. In the second part, I move to interrogate how interventions in the theater that explicitly targeted what Marcuse termed the "total administration" of society contributed to new, albeit different, forms of domination.¹⁹ Rather than present this condition as a failing in Marcuse's logic, I argue that we should view it as indicative of a general historical transformation underway in the late 1960s, in which activist attacks on the rigid administration of everyday life inadvertently assisted the flexible reorganization of the labor process according to the interests of late capitalism.

Solidarities of Sentiment: Peter Weiss and the Early Antiwar Movement

Fredric Jameson aptly identifies Peter Weiss as "one of the rare late modern artists" who not only refused the "separation" between vanguard politics and avant-garde aesthetics, but

¹⁸ See, for example: David Barnett, *Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the German Theater* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Manfred Kittel, *Marsch durch die Institutionen? Politik und Kultur in Frankfurt nach 1968* (Frankfurt am Main: Oldenburg Verlag, 2011); Dorothea Kraus, "Zwischen Selbst- und Mitbestimmung: Demokratisierungskonzepte im Westdeutschen Theater der frühen Siebziger Jahre," in *Politisches Theater nach 1968: Regie, Dramatik und Organisation*, eds. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2006); Kraus, *Theater-Protteste*, 233-254.

¹⁹ Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," 84.

tried—“by fiat and by an effort of the will”—to put them back together.²⁰ In no single literary work did Weiss’ artistic practice come nearer his political commitment than the documentary play *Viet Nam Diskurs*.²¹

From the start, Weiss’ activism against the war in Vietnam was closely tethered to his activity as a writer. Weiss’ first antiwar demonstration in April 1966 came while attending a meeting of the influential German writer’s group Gruppe 47, hosted that year at Princeton University. Together with Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Weiss left the proceedings to join Princeton students in a sit-in against the war.²² In a speech that same weekend delivered at a conference called “The Artist in Affluent Society” Weiss acknowledged that his writing lacked political commitment. This hardly meant, he readily admitted, that his work up until then had been without political consequence. “Commitment to art,” he declared, had made him complicit with a repressive status quo, and thus “part of the corruption.”²³ Titled “I Come Out of My Hiding Place,” Weiss’ address announced his resolve to “stand up” for the “suppressed and exploited” in his writing from that point on.²⁴ Such metaphors of embodied action would become sticking points in debates on the potential of art and activism in Western Europe to provide meaningful support to the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF).

Weiss soon made good on his promise to commit his writing to anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World. That August, he published his first article on the Vietnam conflict in a Swedish newspaper.²⁵ Together with two dozen other artists and intellectuals like Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre, Weiss participated in the International War Crimes Tribunal in the fall of 1966.²⁶ His fervent engagement with Vietnam lasted until his death in 1982, yielding dozens of articles, interviews, speeches, and two books on the conflict.²⁷

Weiss’ writerly commitment suited the twin aims of the early antiwar movement in West Germany: raising awareness and eliciting outrage. West German students had begun mobilizing around the war in 1964. By early 1965, popular knowledge of the conflict spread as news of the near daily bombing of North Vietnam by US forces became a fixture in the West German press. It was not long before the large and well-organized *Kampagne für Abrüstung* (Campaign for Disarmament, or KfA) took up the cause, making the Vietnam conflict the central site of activist

²⁰ Fredric Jameson, “Foreword: A Monument to Radical Instants,” in Peter Weiss, *The Aesthetics of Resistance Vol. I* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), xviii.

²¹ Peter Weiss, *Viet Nam Diskurs* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967).

²² Robert Cohen, *Understanding Peter Weiss* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 108.

²³ Peter Weiss, “I Come Out of My Hiding Place,” *The Nation*, May 30, 1966, 655.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Peter Weiss, “Vietnam!” in *Rapporte 2* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), 51-62.

²⁶ *Against The Crime of Silence: Proceedings of The Russell International War Crimes Tribunal*, ed. John Duffett (New York: O’Hare Books, 1968).

²⁷ For a complete list of Weiss’ works on Vietnam, see Hyeong Shik Kim, *Peter Weiss’ Viet Nam Diskurs’: Möglichkeiten und Formen eines Engagements für die Dritte Welt*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 176. Weiss’ books on Vietnam include: Peter Weiss, *Bericht über die Angriffe der US-Luftwaffe und -Marine gegen die Demokratische Republik Viet Nam nach der Erklärung Präsident Johnsons über die ‘begrenzte bombardierung’ am März 1968* (Frankfurt am Main: Voltaire 1968); Peter Weiss, *Notizen zum Kulturellen Leben in der Demokratischen Republik Viet Nam* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968).

mobilization in West Germany.²⁸ Historians estimate that in 1965 and 1966 alone over 100,000 people participated in 14 peace marches organized by the KfA across the country.²⁹ This first phase of the antiwar movement focused efforts mostly on demonstrations and educational events designed to educate the public about the conflict.

The clearest articulation of the early antiwar movement was the “Declaration against the War in Vietnam,” prepared in late 1965 by intellectuals, artists, and students affiliated with the leftist West Berlin Argument Club.³⁰ The declaration grounded opposition to the war on primarily humanitarian concerns. In addition to detailing the atrocities committed against the Vietnamese people at the hands of American forces, it disputed US claims that the war aimed to secure freedom in the region. Moreover, the authors called for the enforcement of liberal norms in Vietnam based on the provisions of the Geneva Agreements. First circulated in December 1965, the declaration drew signatures from thousands, including Ernst Bloch and Heinrich Böll, as well as 1,500 students at the Free University Berlin (FU).³¹ Those who signed vowed to “distance” themselves from the “moralistic and financial support of the Vietnam war by the Federal Republic.”³² Against criticisms of the declaration’s clement tone, Helmut Schauer, then-chair of West Germany’s largest leftist student organization, the SDS, defended the statement as having been crafted to attract a broad constituency to the antiwar movement, even if they were “not all socialists.”³³

This humanitarian approach to antiwar organizing reached its peak with the March 1966 conference, “Vietnam: Analysis of an Example,” organized by the SDS in Frankfurt am Main. The gathering’s name indicated its largely informational aims. The roughly 2,200 participants attended working sessions and talks by prominent scholars like Jürgen Habermas and Oskar Negt. While the focus on “analysis” left little room for planning future actions, the daylong event culminated with the largest Vietnam War march and rally up to that point in West Germany.³⁴

The march ended at the historic Römerberg Square where Herbert Marcuse delivered a stirring keynote address voicing support for the movement’s consciousness-raising efforts. He extolled Western “intellectuals and youths” as a real “counterforce” in the Vietnam struggle, but

²⁸ Wilfred Mausbach, “Auschwitz und Vietnam: West German Protest Against America’s War During the 1960s,” in *America, the Vietnam War and the World*, eds. Andreas Daum et al. (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2003), 285.

²⁹ Wernicke, Günter. “‘Solidarität hilft siegen!’ Zur Solidaritätsbewegung mit Vietnam in beiden deutschen Staaten,” *Hefte zur DDR-Geschichte* 72 (2001): 24.

³⁰ “Erklärung über den Krieg in Vietnam,” reproduced in *Provokationen. Die Studenten- und Jugendrevolte in ihren Flugblättern 1965-1971*, eds. Miermeister and Stadt (Darmstadt: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1980), 79-81. See also, “Vietnam. ‘Analyse eines Exempels.’ Studentenkongreß am 22.Mai 1966 in der Universität Frankfurt. Einladung.” APOA, “Kongreß Vietnam ‘Analyse eines Exempels’ 66” folder.

³¹ “Wasser in den Augen,” *Spiegel*, December 22, 1965, 33; Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 83-4.

³² “Erklärung über den Krieg in Vietnam,” 81.

³³ “Referat des 1. SDS Bundesvorstizender Helmut Schauer während der LVV in Berlin am 18 Mai 1966,” reprinted in *Freie Universität Berlin, 1948-1973: Hochschule im Umbruch*, eds. Siegwald Lönnendonker and Tilman Fichter (Berlin: Pressestelle d. FU Berlin, 1975), 314.

³⁴ Siegwald Lönnendonker, Bernd Rabehl, and Jochen Stadt, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte: der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund nach der Trennung von der SPD*, (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 275-80.

carefully noted clear limits to the movement.³⁵ On whether there existed “a basis for concrete solidarity” between West German activists and the NLF, Marcuse was emphatic:

My answer: none, except for the solidarity of reason and sentiment. This instinctive and intellectual solidarity is today perhaps the strongest radical power that we have. One should not downplay such solidarity, especially not the instinctive solidarity of sentiment. It goes deeper than organized solidarity; it is part of the force of the negative, with which transformation begins.³⁶

While valorizing the antiwar movement, his remarks also gestured to the unfamiliar challenges the Vietnam War presented to leftist politics in West Germany. Solidarity with the NLF complicated conventional notions of leftist struggle, which traditionally had been based on supporting working class struggles in industrialized nations. For his part, Marcuse refused attributing a progressive role to the contemporary working class in the West. He reaffirmed his influential argument in books like *One-Dimensional Man*, which theorized why postwar affluence had “integrated” workers into the capitalist status quo. But for Marcuse, the prosperity of a country like West Germany was the dialectical counterpoint to the immiseration of colonized populations, who he believed to be the “crucial counterforce” to postwar capitalism. Although several forms of “social and geographic” distance separated Vietnam from West Germany, Marcuse’s totalizing view of global imperialism justified the antiwar activities of West German students and intellectuals. Their “main task,” he argued, was “to work for the liberation of consciousness and knowledge” at home. Despite underscoring the necessarily mediated character of solidarity available to West Germans, Marcuse nevertheless insisted that the activist practices derived from such solidarity constituted “immediate political work” whose fruits would provide “a basic *material* condition” for transforming existing society.³⁷ While inspirational to many, the vagueness of his formulation sparked extensive debate as the movement went forward.

In many ways, Weiss’ *Viet Nam Diskurs* seemed a model of the “political work” Marcuse had recommended. When Weiss first began writing the play in the winter of 1966, he was arguably the world’s most celebrated German-language playwright, largely on account of the recent successes of *Marat/Sade* and *Die Ermittlung* (The Investigation). Yet the aspirations that guided *Viet Nam Diskurs* distinguished it decisively from these earlier plays. Where *Marat/Sade* (1964) had offered an ambivalent and absurdist perspective on revolutionary engagement, *Viet Nam Diskurs* was born of Weiss’ newfound commitment to anti-imperialist struggle. *Die Ermittlung* (1965) and *Viet Nam Diskurs* both belonged to the genre of documentary theater, but unlike *Die Ermittlung*’s historically reflective condemnation of Nazism, *Viet Nam Diskurs*

³⁵ Herbert Marcuse, “Vietnam – Analyse eines Exempels (1966),” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung. Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995: Dokumente*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 207.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 208.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

fervently engaged the present with a vehement condemnation of the ongoing war in Vietnam, something laid bare in the play's lengthy official title: *Discourse on the Background and the Course of the Long-Lasting War of Liberation in Vietnam as an Example of the Necessity of Armed Struggle by the Oppressed against their Oppressors as well as on Attempts of the United States of America to Destroy the Foundations of Revolution*.

Viet Nam Diskurs appeared in print from Suhrkamp Verlag at the end of 1967. In an introductory note, Weiss recommended that the long documentary play, which features no distinct characters, be performed by a cast of fifteen. Its first part, "Prehistory and Development," summarizes over two thousand years of invasions and repeated attempts to colonize Vietnam, presented ostensibly from the perspective of the Vietnamese people. In the second half titled, "Attempts," Weiss traces the escalation of the US intervention following France's defeat at Dien-Bien-Phu in 1954. The play situates the ensuing conflict as just one instance in the expansion of a devastating imperialist system of economic exploitation.

Some scholars have described *Viet Nam Diskurs* as a "failure," arguing that it arrived too late to fill any information gap in West Germany about the war. In her critique of the play, Cordelia Scharpf reminds readers that since at least early 1967, there had been "abundant coverage" of the conflict in West Germany.³⁸ At issue for Weiss, however, was not a dearth of reporting on Vietnam, but the "deception," "reality-forgery," and "lies" that defined this information.³⁹ After conducting extensive research for the play, Weiss concluded that the information West Germans received about the war from politicians and the media was not just limited, but severely distorted.⁴⁰ He hoped a documentary play on the conflict could combat what he termed the "politics of obfuscation and blinding."⁴¹ Weiss' use of the documentary form was hardly unprecedented in 1960s West Germany. Following the premiere of Rolf Hochhuth's *Der Stellvertreter* in 1963, the genre had become a fixture in West German theaters. At the time, it was largely associated with the *Bewältigungsdramatik* popularized by Hochhuth, Heiner Kipphardt, and Weiss himself, which focused primarily on coming to terms with the Holocaust.⁴² *Viet Nam Diskurs* broke with this tendency both by tackling a current issue and refusing the objectivity then coupled to the documentary form.

³⁸ Cordelia Scharpf, "Vietnam Discourse: Its Reception in the Two Germanys," in *Rethinking Peter Weiss*, eds. Jost Hermand and Marc Silberman, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000), 132.

³⁹ Peter Weiss, "Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater," *Theater Heute* 3 (1968): 32.

⁴⁰ In a notebook entry from the time, Weiss tersely wrote, "All the political facts are unreliable. All the political statements are unreliable. The whole political historiography is a fabrication." Peter Weiss, *Notizbücher 1960-1971*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1982) 279. While doing research for the play, Weiss worked in close collaboration with the student activist Jürgen Horlemann, co-author of Jürgen Horlemann and Peter Gäng, *Vietnam: Genesis eines Konfliktes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966).

⁴¹ Weiss, "Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater," 33.

⁴² See Günther Rühle, "Versuche über eine geschlossene Gesellschaft: Das dokumentarische Drama und die deutsche Gesellschaft," *Theater Heute* (October 1966). For a helpful discussion and overview of documentary literature in 1960s West Germany, see, R. Hinton Thomas and Keith Bullivant, *Literature in Upheaval: West German writers and the challenge of the 1960s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 92-127.

To coincide with the play's premiere in Frankfurt am Main, Weiss issued a landmark treatise on documentary theater, which embraced the genre as a "means of public protest."⁴³ First published in the March 1968 issue of *Theater Heute*, "Notes on Documentary Theater" likened documentary plays to the "signs, banners, and chants" of a demonstration. As with any public form of protest, a play like *Viet Nam Diskurs*, Weiss insisted, should be "partisan" and "an instrument of political opinion building." What mattered most was not that documentary theater drew on facts or "authentic material," but *how* it did so. Weiss compared his preferred method of documentary theater to sketching a "black and white drawing" of genocide in which "solidarity is only possible for the side of plundered."⁴⁴ By the time of the premiere, he was infamous in West Germany for describing US intentions in Vietnam as "genocide."⁴⁵ But when Weiss spoke of building "solidarity" and making clear there was "only one side to stand on" with regard to the conflict in Vietnam, what forms did he see solidarity with Vietnam taking in West Germany?⁴⁶ And for Western European intellectuals and students, could the act of standing on the side of the NLF be anything more than a metaphorical gesture?

Such questions were not reserved for art-based interventions into the war; they were the ground for fierce debate within West Germany's antiwar movement following the 1966 Vietnam conference. Among politically committed writers, this debate played out most notably in a heated exchange between Peter Weiss and Hans Magnus Enzensberger in the New Left journal, *Kursbuch*. The dispute started with an article by Enzensberger published in 1965, in which the noted poet and critic argued that postwar geopolitical developments had made it impossible for any sort of solidarity to be shared between individuals living in "rich" and "poor" countries.⁴⁷ Undoubtedly inspired by his own initial involvement in the emerging antiwar movement, Weiss responded in the summer of 1966 by describing Enzensberger's portrait as "imaginary," more indicative of the poet's "passive and fatalistic" attitude than the reality of the anti-imperialist struggle itself.⁴⁸ To divide the world into "rich" and "poor" countries, Weiss contended, obscured how capital operated in the postwar period, not to mention the interests it served globally. In Weiss' opinion, Enzensberger ignored the stratification that persisted inside affluent and impoverished countries alike. When it came to whether West European writers like himself could support struggles unfolding in faraway places like Vietnam, the only question Weiss found pertinent was: "Can we let go of our doubts and our cautions, and risk to declare: We stand in solidarity with the oppressed, and as authors we will search for any means possible to support you in your (it is also our) struggle?"⁴⁹

⁴³ Weiss, "Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater," 32.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ "Vietnam Amerika will den Volker mord: Gespräch mit Peter Weiss über Vietnam," *Spiegel*, August 5, 1968, 70.

⁴⁶ "Die Bundesrepublik ist ein Morast: Interview mit Peter Weiss," *Spiegel*, March 18, 1968, 182.

⁴⁷ Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Europäische Peripherie." *Kursbuch*, no. 2 (1965): 154.

⁴⁸ Peter Weiss, "Enzensbergers Illusionen," *Kursbuch*, no. 6 (1966): 166. Enzensberger's polemic occasioned several responses in addition to Weiss'. See for example, Jakob Mader, "Peripheres Europa?" *Kürbiskern*, no. 2 (1966): 142-157.

⁴⁹ Peter Weiss, "Enzensbergers Illusionen," 170.

Enzensberger issued a direct reply in the very same issue, criticizing Weiss for overestimating the extent to which literary activities in Western Europe could support the struggle in Vietnam. How could authors who live in “five bedroom apartments” and who “travel maybe once to Cuba or the Soviet Union, and then only as tourists,” Enzensberger mused, consider themselves to be struggling “shoulder to shoulder” with those in the Third World?⁵⁰ Enzensberger dismantled the metaphors of embodied action Weiss had employed to describe his committed writing. Instead, Enzensberger argued that to write an editorial on struggles abroad was “nothing more than theory. It is merely words.”⁵¹ The title of his response, “Peter Weiss and Others,” signaled that Enzensberger had other targets in mind than just Weiss. In 1966, Enzensberger’s argument easily appeared to *Kursbuch*’s politically engaged readership as a response to Marcuse’s recent speech at the Vietnam conference, which had just been published.⁵² “Sentiment,” Enzensberger agreed with Marcuse, was the basis of “all meaningful political work.” But, he asked, “Can it replace meaningful political work?”⁵³

For his part, Weiss in no way claimed that writing could substitute for the type of revolutionary efforts being performed in Vietnam. When *Spiegel* asked him in June 1968 whether he had ever considered “fighting on the side of the North Vietnamese, like European intellectuals fought for the Spanish Republic in 1936 to 1939,” the 52 year-old Weiss responded plainly: “I do not think I would get around very well with a machine gun in the Vietnamese jungle. [...] I believe that the work I can perform more successfully lies in another area and on my own latitude.”⁵⁴ Weiss carefully distinguished between different terrains of struggle in his defense of the importance of raising awareness and eliciting outrage in Western Europe. Enzensberger’s challenge, however, was categorical. He was not convinced that raising consciousness in West Germany could be “meaningful” in the sense of contributing immediate support to those struggling in Vietnam. Enzensberger was not at all alone in this view. It reflected emerging disputes within the antiwar movement itself. The section that follows surveys these tensions to clarify the fraught responses that different productions of *Viet Nam Diskurs* went on to receive.

The Antiwar Movement’s Turn to Resistance

At the time of the exchange between Enzensberger and Weiss, the West German antiwar movement relied chiefly on a discourse of victimization in their protests. On the one hand, this befitted the humanitarian focus that prevailed in the movement. But it also indexed a tendency for presenting the struggle in Vietnam as, to use the wording of the 1966 Vietnam Congress, “an example” of capitalist subjugation, useful for illustrating the ills of the economic system

⁵⁰ Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “Peter Weiss und andere,” *Kursbuch*, no. 6 (1966): 175.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Herbert Marcuse, “Vietnam—Analyse eines Exempels,” *neue kritik* 7 (1966).

⁵³ Enzensberger, “Peter Weiss und andere,” 175.

⁵⁴ Peter Weiss, “Amerika will den Völkermord: Spiegel Gespräch mit Peter Weiss über Vietnam,” 74.

generally. In some cases, this approach verged on opportunistic instrumentalization of the Vietnam conflict. Historian Quinn Slobodian reminds us that the KfA, the driving force behind many early antiwar protests, tended “toward a national myopia that assessed global situations only according to their threat to German lives.”⁵⁵ Similarly, in remarks to the SDS in 1965, then-SDS chair Helmut Schauer had warned against letting Vietnam distract from the more urgent concerns of class struggle at home, describing protests against the war as a “*Fernflucht*” (flight to the distant).⁵⁶ Traditional socialists like Schauer still viewed the working class in advanced industrial countries as the proper revolutionary subject. Although the conflict in Vietnam could be used to mobilize socialist struggle in West Germany, it was not, in Schauer’s opinion, a portent of world historical revolution.

This perspective became the object of virulent critique from within the antiwar movement. At the 1966 Vietnam Conference, antiauthoritarian student activists from West Berlin distributed a provocative flier condemning the “solidarity with underdogs whimpered by the lame student movement until now” and called on others to “become powerful in solidarity with the victors, more powerful with every American plane shot down, every draft card burned.”⁵⁷ These activists, much influenced by Marcuse and decolonization figures like Frantz Fanon, accused the movement’s humanitarian emphasis as refusing the agency of those struggling in Vietnam by couching them only as victims. Unlike traditional socialists, antiauthoritarians viewed decolonization and anti-imperialist struggles as the primary anti-capitalist force.

Particularly objectionable to antiauthoritarians like Rudi Dutschke and Bernd Rabehl was the early antiwar movement’s appeals to government officials to enforce liberal norms. This approach, they argued, imbricated the opposition in the very structures it sought to undo. To conclude the 1966 Vietnam Congress, for example, Schauer read a telegram addressed to the West German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard imploring the government to stop supporting the war in the name of the German people.⁵⁸ Antiauthoritarian critics charged that such public performances legitimated the authority of the war’s staunchest supporters by leaving the responsibility for redress in their hands. Schauer himself readily admitted the inefficacy of lobbying politicians. “Of course, appealing to the Johnson administration to end the intervention and the war is incorrect, and obscures the actual circumstances,” he declared in a meeting of the SDS, “but we are not formulating our political goals for Johnson, but for those we want to win for our cause and draw into our movement.”⁵⁹ As they made clear in a letter to the national SDS leadership sent days before the 1966 congress, antiauthoritarian activists were unconvinced that

⁵⁵ Quinn Slobodian, “Radical Empathy: The Third World and the New Left in 1960s West Germany,” (PhD Diss., New York University, 2008), 132.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Lönnendonker, Rabehl, Staadt, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte: der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund nach der Trennung von der SPD*, 213.

⁵⁷ Reprinted in Lönnendonker and Fichter, eds., *Freie Universität Berlin, 1948-1973: Hochschule im Umbruch*, 96.

⁵⁸ Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung. Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995: Chronik*, 234.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 97.

“an immanent critique of the contravention of bourgeois norms in Vietnam” could “unify the opposition.” Appeals to politicians and existing institutional processes, they argued, only served “to camouflage the actual process at work.”⁶⁰

Frustrated by the direction of the antiwar movement, antiauthoritarian activists in West Berlin took up a more confrontational approach based on direct action and civil disobedience. In 1966, they began posting illegal fliers, staging sit-ins, and disrupting traffic.⁶¹ The headline-grabbing provocations in West Berlin soon inspired activists in other cities to follow suit. At a demonstration on February 17, 1967 in Frankfurt am Main, activists lobbed smoke bombs at police and blocked streets. A month later in Munich, demonstrators clashed with officers outside the US consulate, throwing eggs and holding a sit-in.⁶² By the end of 1967, as the war intensified and police repression increasingly radicalized West German students, the antiauthoritarian position became the antiwar movement’s guiding tendency. Exemplary of this shift was the warm reception Dutschke and Hans-Jürgen Krahl received from the SDS in the fall of 1967, when they infamously called for “the propaganda of gunfire in the Third World” to be joined “by the propaganda of the deed in the metropole.”⁶³ News of the Tet Offensive in late January 1968 proved to many that an NLF victory was possible, and further cemented the turn away from pacifism. Solidarity rallies in Frankfurt and Munich that January and February turned into near riots as activists committed property destruction against US government buildings. To contain an especially turbulent demonstration in Hamburg, the city even deployed the army.⁶⁴

This shift in the antiwar movement was performed most dramatically at the International Vietnam Congress on February 17, 1968, held at the Technical University (TU) in West Berlin. Before a massive NLF flag draped across the entire back of the TU’s main auditorium, five thousand activists—including Peter Weiss—from across Europe and beyond gathered for what most historians agree was “the high point of the Vietnam campaign in Germany and one of the key events for the movement internationally.”⁶⁵ In a clear departure from the movement’s earlier discourse of victimization, giant lettering on the flag boldly declared, “For the victory of the Vietnamese revolution.” Throughout the congress, booming chants of “Ho-Ho! Ho-Chi-Minh” rattled the auditorium.⁶⁶

The official announcement for the congress articulated a clear relationship between conditions in Vietnam and Western Europe by averring that the war “directly impacts the

⁶⁰ Reprinted in Lönnendonker, Rabehl, and Staat, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte: der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund nach der Trennung von der SPD*, 257.

⁶¹ See Chapter Two of this dissertation for more details of the antiauthoritarian turn in the German New Left.

⁶² For a summary of this escalation, see: Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*, (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 76-85.

⁶³ Rudi Dutschke and Hans-Jürgen Krahl, “Sich-Verweigern erfordert Guerilla-Mentalität,” in *Geschichte ist Machbar* (Berlin: Wagenbachs Taschereibücherei, 1980), 91.

⁶⁴ Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*, 82.

⁶⁵ In addition to Western European nations, delegates came from Ethiopia, South Africa, Latin America, Iran, and the United States. See: Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*, 82.

⁶⁶ For video footage of the conference, see the film, *Terror auch im Westen* (1968). Deutsche Kinemathek Museum für Film und Fernsehen.

European working class in its struggle for socialism.” Replacing the populist language of the 1966 “Declaration against the Vietnam War” that had deliberately avoided the word “socialist,” was an internationalist resolve that Western Europe not remain a “quiet zone for imperialism.” Instead, the announcement insisted that Europe become the site of “a resolute anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist” struggle that could “weaken the international counter-revolution.”⁶⁷ Posters advertising the conference invoked a noble precedent for internationalist struggle by declaring: “Vietnam is the Spain of our generation.”⁶⁸

In his opening remarks to the congress, Karl Dietrich Wolff, the new chair of the SDS, set the tone for the gathering, asserting that the antiwar movement in Europe must transition from “mere protest against mass murder and the imperialist war [...] to resistance.”⁶⁹ Wolff’s call introduced the central refrain of speeches that day: the need to move, as many put it, “from protest to resistance.” Near the close of the congress, Hans-Jürgen Krahl offered a vision of what resistance to the Vietnam War could look like in Western Europe. In doing so, the leading movement theorist and student of Theodor Adorno disputed Marcuse’s position from the Vietnam conference two years earlier. Krahl contended that “a concrete basis for creating solidarity between the protest movements in the metropolises and the liberation movements in the Third World” did exist beyond “the Marcusian held possibility of the solidarity of reason and sentiment.”⁷⁰ By pointing to the worsening economic conditions in advanced industrial countries, he argued that American imperialism was immiserating its allies along with its enemies. “This inner-capitalist level of contradiction” he claimed, described “the concrete political basis of solidarity” and necessitated the “advance from protest to political resistance.” With the goal of building a “second front against imperialism in the metropolises,” Krahl and others proposed assembling the Smash NATO. It would entail establishing an institutional framework for coordinating collaboration among antiwar movements throughout Western Europe to “disrupt the military power of the NATO-armies.”⁷¹ Krahl posited several examples of the form that “concrete solidarity with the revolutionary liberation movements in the third world” could take, such as preventing “the transport of American war materials for the war in Vietnam,” and conducting actions “against sites of the American armaments industry in Western Europe.”⁷²

Krahl’s lengthy presentation offered arguably the most programmatic vision for moving “from protest to resistance.” Many activists viewed resistance in a way more akin to Marcuse’s

⁶⁷ “Der Kampf des vietnamesischen Volkes und die Globalstrategie des Imperialismus: Aufruf zur Internationalen Vietnamkonferenz 17/18 Februar in Berlin.” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240 Karton 317, Vietnam Kundgebungen und Demonstrationen, Document 47. Reprinted in *Provokationen. Die Studenten- und Jugendrevolte in ihren Flugblättern 1965-1971*, 113-115.

⁶⁸ Erklärung zur International Vietnamkonferenz — Westberlin, 17./18. Febr. 1968” (Poster Version). Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240 Karton 317, Vietnam Kundgebungen und Demonstrationen, Document 88.

⁶⁹ Quoted in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung. Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995: Chronik*, 297-298.

⁷⁰ Hans-Jürgen Krahl, “Diskussionsbeitrag auf dem ‘Internationalen Vietnam-Kongreß’ in West-Berlin, 18 Februar 1968,” in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung. Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995: Dokumente*, 345.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 346.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 347.

notoriously vague definition of resistance as the “natural right [...] for oppressed and overpowered minorities to use extralegal means if the legal ones have proved to be inadequate.”⁷³ One announcement for the International Vietnam Congress warned against performing “symbolic attacks against imperialism, instead of *really* combatting imperialism.” Having made this crucial distinction, the statement went on to offer five suggestions for intervention:

1. Demonstrations and blockades in front of the production plants of American companies that produce weapons of destruction, like for example DOW Chemical (manufacturers of napalm)
2. Organization of strikes in ports where war materials or vital wartime goods are transferred
3. Organization of a West European campaign calling for desertion from the American army
4. Demonstrations against NATO bases
5. Collective supplying of a ship that delivers medication and weapons to Vietnam⁷⁴

In a May 1968 column for *konkret*, appropriately titled “From Protest to Resistance,” Ulrike Meinhof offered arguably the most infamous articulation of the move to resistance: “Protest is when I say I don’t like this. Resistance is when I put an end to what I don’t like.”⁷⁵ Like so many others, Meinhof placed protest and resistance in binary opposition, going so far as to identify “the boundary between verbal protest and physical resistance.”⁷⁶ For her, the move to resistance involved shifting from discourse to action, from speech to embodied intervention, and, to use the words of Enzensberger, from “words” to “meaningful political work.” While certainly a reductive formulation, Meinhof’s articulation provides insight into the conflicts that surfaced in the productions of *Viet Nam Diskurs* I examine in the second half of this chapter.

The Repressive Tolerance of *Viet Nam Diskurs*

By the time of the International Vietnam Congress in 1968, Weiss’ approach to engaging the war in Vietnam had transformed along similar lines as the antiwar movement had. In his speech at the congress, Weiss himself urged those present to commit “sabotage wherever it is possible,” which prompted newspapers like the *Berliner Morgenpost* to report: “Weiss calls for Sabotage!”⁷⁷ Weiss’ support for the move “from protest to resistance” was more than rhetorical; he also committed much of the funding for the International News and Research Institute in West

⁷³ Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance,” 116.

⁷⁴ “Aufruf an die detuschen Hochschulen zur Teilnahme an der Internationalen Vietnamkonferenz am 17/18 Februar in Berlin” Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep 240 Karton 317, Vietnam Kundgebungen und Demonstrationen, Document 48.

⁷⁵ Ulrike Meinhof, “From Protest to Resistance,” in *Everybody Talks About the Weather... We Don’t*, ed. and trans. Karin Bauer (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 239.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁷⁷ “Weiss ruft Genossen zur Sabotage auf,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, February 18, 1968, 3.

Berlin, planned as the research arm of Smash NATO.⁷⁸ Yet at the time Weiss attended the congress, he was also regularly visiting rehearsals for the West German premiere of *Viet Nam Diskurs* in Frankfurt am Main. If we recall how activists would censure the premiere for indirectly legitimating the city government's repression of dissent, the synchronicity of these activities is surprising. Only adding to the discrepancies between Weiss' militant turn and the Frankfurt production was the "humanitarian spirit" that explicitly guided Harry Buckwitz' staging of the play.⁷⁹

Buckwitz based the Frankfurt production on a revised version of Weiss' text that he developed in collaboration with Weiss, his wife Gunilla Palmstierna-Weiss, and the Suhrkamp editors of the play.⁸⁰ Not only did the revision shorten what otherwise would have been a four-hour long performance, but Weiss even wrote a new conclusion that strengthened what Buckwitz described as productions' "humanitarian tenor." Buckwitz explained that these modifications worked to move *Viet Nam Diskurs* from the realm of "*Tagespolitik*" (current affairs) to "*Alltagspolitik*" (politics of everyday life) by generalizing the play's particular focus on the war in Vietnam. "If we had luck that peace in Vietnam broke out today," Buckwitz pronounced in an interview leading up to the premiere, "the play would lose nothing of its importance." According to Buckwitz, the war in Vietnam spoke to issues of exploitation and violence common to "many situations in the world."⁸¹ His directorial approach suggested that Vietnam was itself interchangeable with other conflicts across time, which raises obvious doubts as to whether he viewed his production as directly supporting the struggle in Vietnam. Although Buckwitz never addressed what might be lost in such generalization, he emphasized a desire to reach a wide audience. In much the same manner as Helmut Schauer's defense of the "Declaration on the Vietnam War," Buckwitz defended his staging during the impromptu discussion that followed the premiere as "not for the SDS, but for all citizens."⁸² That Weiss did not just approve the direction Buckwitz took the play, but contributed to it through his revisions and regular attendance at rehearsals reveals a striking inconsistency between his practices as an artist and activist at this time.

Buckwitz' actual staging of the *Viet Nam Diskurs* closely followed the instructions Weiss set forth in his introduction to the play.⁸³ The set designed by Weiss' wife was a vast and sparse white space. Scene changes were indicated by large pieces of white rectangular cloth that dropped from the rafters bearing information in black text to contextualize the action onstage.

⁷⁸ Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Rudi Dutschke und die bewaffnete Kampf," in *Rudi Dutschke Andreas Baader und die RAF*, eds. Wolfgang Kraushaar et al. (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), 27; Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*, 158.

⁷⁹ Wilm von Elbwart and Harry Buckwitz, "'Das Theater soll sich den politischen Fragen stellen,' Gespräch mit dem Frankfurter Generalintendanten über den 'Vietnam-Diskurs' von Peter Weiss," *Die Andere Zeitung*, February 29, 1968. AdK-HB, Folder 129.

⁸⁰ The revised script Buckwitz used can be found in: AdK-HB, Folder 128.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² "So erscheinen Sie sich das Grosse Alibi," 8.

⁸³ The following description of the production are taken largely from, Egon Menz, "Probenbericht vom 'Diskurs über Viet Nam,'" *Theater Heute* (April 1968): 12-15.

Only adding to the stark visual contrast were the costumes worn by performers. Buckwitz divided the cast into two choral groupings, one costumed in black to indicate the Vietnamese people and their ever-changing allies, and the other in white to denote colonialists and other adversaries. To differentiate within these groupings, performers carried props like weapons and flags, or wore tailored costumes that designated differences between, for example, French and Chinese soldiers. The stylized and tightly choreographed movements followed a specific pattern established in Weiss' stage directions. The stage floor was partitioned into four "sectors," each corresponding to a directional point of a compass. To illustrate the effect of the countless invasions and wars that dominated the long history of the Vietnamese people, ensemble members moved across the sectors as the production recounted periods of displacement and migration. Accompanying the action were three variants of a single musical phrase: the start of the performance featured a recording performed by a full orchestra, the second variant included a flute and drums, and during moments depicting periods of oppression, music was reduced to only drumming. In a sense, the production took Weiss' vision of documentary theater as "a black and white drawing" almost literally.⁸⁴

Critical response to the production was tepid at best.⁸⁵ Many left the theater decrying the performance for being "one-sided."⁸⁶ One critic, Horst Ziermann, went so far as to declare that the production "is not only false, and it is not only poor: it is evil and it is inhuman."⁸⁷ Less histrionic reviews took aim at the production's aesthetic strategy. Writing in *Die Zeit*, the novelist Walter Jens lamented the play's overtness, writing that it showed "results" but not "processes." Audiences could glimpse "conditions" and "statistics" but were not "taught about developments." In short, Jens described *Viet Nam Diskurs* as "not exciting and not very instructive."⁸⁸ Literary theorist Bernd Warneken critiqued the play along similar lines, dismissing Weiss' reliance on statistics and (often manipulated) quotations as an attempt to use "surface" details to "make concrete what political economy only allows to be conceptualized."⁸⁹ For both Jens and Warneken, the aesthetic shortcomings of *Viet Nam Diskurs* implied profound political limitations.

Guided by considerably different motivations, the *enfant terrible* of the German literary scene, Peter Handke, took the premiere as the occasion to issue a broadside in *Theater Heute* on

⁸⁴ Weiss, "Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater," 33.

⁸⁵ Unlike *Die Ermittlung*, which premiered on 15 stages simultaneously, the Frankfurter Schauspielhaus was the only theater willing to stage *Viet Nam Diskurs* that spring in West Germany. It did run in East Germany and Japan. Some artistic directors criticized the play's lack of "artistic value," while others claimed it "difficult to realize." See "Dollars für Ho," 181-2. The play eventually ran a total of 32 times in 1968.

⁸⁶ Quoted in "Agitation für die Revolution: in Frankfurt wurde der 'Viet Nam Diskurs' von Peter Weiss uraufgeführt," 2. See the summary of critical responses to the play in: Roger Ellis, *Peter Weiss in Exile: A Critical Study of his Works*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), 65-7; Scharpf, "Vietnam Discourse: Its Reception in the Two Germanys," 131-138.

⁸⁷ Quoted in "Peter Weiss Viet Nam Diskurs Reaktionen." AdK-HB, Folder 29.

⁸⁸ Walter Jens, "Fünf Minuten großes politisches Theater: Zur Uraufführung des Viet-Nams-Stücks von Peter Weiss in Frankfurt," *Die Zeit* 13 (1968): 18.

⁸⁹ Bernd Jürgen Warneken, "Kritik am »Viet Nam Diskurs«,," in *Über Peter Weiss* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973), 117.

why the theater was “useless” for protest.⁹⁰ He claimed to have little problem with protest when it was performed outside the theater, but insisted that it was “false and untrue” for “a group of people chanting for freedom in Vietnam or against the American presence in Vietnam [...] to go into a *Theater* to perform this chant.” Although protest might not be easily kept out of the theater, Handke sternly reminded readers of the theater’s powerful mediating function. “A chant that wants to be effective not on the street, but in the theater,” he declared, “becomes simply kitsch and mannerism.”⁹¹

Unlike Jens, Warneken, and Handke, activist criticism of the production did not concern the fraught relation of aesthetics and politics. As discussed earlier, the wariness of activists had little to do with the aesthetic character of the play. At issue for them was how *Viet Nam Diskurs*—evaluated as an activist practice—indirectly legitimated the exact forms and institutions of repressive authority the play sought to undo. Several reviews echoed this critique, noting how the play’s institutional conditions of production were anything but radical. Henning Rischbieter, writing for *Theater Heute*, lauded the production’s informative “pamphlet character,” but lamented how “[t]he discrepancy between the institution and the text was not resolved.” This left the production, he asserted, to “smack of hideous ridiculousness.”⁹²

In “Notes on Documentary Theater,” Weiss himself denounced documentary plays shown in “commercial stage spaces with the associated high ticket prices” for being “caught in the system [they] want to attack.” He championed instead documentary theater to be performed in “factories, schools, [and] sports arenas.”⁹³ Weiss repeated this sentiment in an interview two days before the Frankfurt premiere, explaining that he wanted *Viet Nam Diskurs* to “be seen by those people who I expect to change society,” even going so far as to claim, “Society will not be changed by the social circles of people who sit in the front row of the bourgeois theater.”⁹⁴ The program for the production included the entire text of Weiss’ treatise on documentary theater, meaning that those sitting in “the front row” likely read Weiss’ appraisal of them. But the program also pointed to the incongruity between the play’s political leanings and its conditions of possibility in a different way.⁹⁵ In addition to Weiss’ article, several other informative texts were printed in the program, such as a timeline explaining the history of post-1945 Vietnam, a German translation of Ho Chi Minh’s “My path to Leninism,” and an article by Jürgen Horlemann, a prominent student activist and coauthor of a much-read primer on the conflict. Also featured prominently in the program, and sometimes alongside these highly politicized texts, were dozens of advertisements. One from the Frankfurter Bank, for example, celebrated the “role” played by finance in West German cultural life. If nothing else, the ads illustrated in striking fashion the production’s proximity to the very principle of exchange Weiss’ anti-imperialist play targeted.

⁹⁰ Handke, “Straßen-Theater und Theater-Theater,” 7.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Rischbieter, “Spielform des politischen Theaters,” 158.

⁹³ Weiss, “Notizen zum Dokumentarischen Theater,” 254.

⁹⁴ Peter Weiss, “Die Bundesrepublik ist ein Morast: Interview mit Peter Weiss,” 182.

⁹⁵ The program can be found in AdK-HB, Folder 129.

Activists at the premiere also emphasized the disjuncture between political sentiment and “meaningful” political work as it related to the production. One flier distributed to the audience argued that holding a critical opinion of the war was not enough; to really “take a side” in the conflict, one must provide concrete support to the NLF.⁹⁶ As an opportunity for the audience to put into practice the sentiment roused by the production, activists led a collection for the NLF, gathering DM 1,432.87.⁹⁷ Weiss himself embraced the student intervention, declaring at one point during the discussion: “Comrades, be activists! Get out on the streets!”⁹⁸

From ‘Discourse’ to ‘Action’: *Viet Nam Diskurs* at the Kammerspiele

Taken together with the criticisms of the Frankfurt production of *Viet Nam Diskurs*, Weiss’ call for activists to move out of the theater and “into the streets” might suggest that the space of the theater was generally viewed as antithetical to “meaningful political work.” This was, however, hardly the case. Accompanying the antiwar movement’s turn to resistance in 1968 was the call to begin interventions into public institutions. As famously envisioned by the leading antiauthoritarian activist Rudi Dutschke in his speech at the International Vietnam Congress in February 1968, “the long march through institutions” was understood as the dialectical complement to “resistance.”⁹⁹ Activists were supposed to match radical actions outside the institutions with attempts to reshape them from within. For Dutschke, no institution should be “privileged” or “fetishized.” This “critical-practical activity” was to be undertaken “in all institutions that contribute to the administration of everyday life.”¹⁰⁰ As the following discussion demonstrates, the young directors Peter Stein and Wolfgang Schwiedzrik understood “the long march through the institutions” to include work within the theater.

Political frustrations with Buckwitz’ staging of *Viet Nam Diskurs* led Stein and Schwiedzrik to undertake the play’s second West German production in July 1968. Despite being produced in another major theater, Stein and Schwiedzrik’s *Viet Nam Diskurs* was developed under strikingly different conditions. The theater in which it was staged, Munich’s Kammerspiele, was considerably smaller and less equipped than Frankfurt’s massive Schauspielhaus. Both young directors had ties to the German New Left, especially the 28-year-old Schwiedzrik who was active in the SDS. Stein was just beginning what would be a legendary career. He had already earned a name for himself earlier in the season with a pair of acclaimed productions.¹⁰¹ The pair’s staging of *Viet Nam Diskurs* included two major changes from the

⁹⁶ “Was hat Vietnam im Theater zu Suchen.” AdK-HB, Folder 129. See also, “VIETNAM geht ALLE an!!!” AdK-HB, Folder 129.

⁹⁷ “Dollars für Ho,” 182.

⁹⁸ “So erschreien sie sich das große Alibi,” 8.

⁹⁹ Rudi Dutschke, “Die Geschichtlichen Bedingungen für den Internationalen Emanzipationskampf (Rede auf dem Vietnam-Kongreß,” in *Geschichte ist Machbar*, 112.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Marvin Carlson, *Theatre is More Beautiful than War: German Stage Directing in the late Twentieth Century* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009), 4-25.

Frankfurt production. Instead of using the play to enlighten theatergoers, Stein and Schwiedzrik wanted to agitate and spur their audiences to action. In addition, the pair literally staged the move “from protest to resistance” by using the production as a vehicle for gathering material support for the NLF.

Like Buckwitz, Stein and Schwiedzrik made extensive cuts to Weiss’ text. Although *Viet Nam Diskurs* was “born from the best of intentions,” Schwiedzrik described the play in interviews as “excruciatingly boring” and “of unbelievable length.”¹⁰² Moreover, both directors claimed to reject Weiss’ belief in the enlightening potential of documentary theater. “[Weiss] thinks that he can have an effect on the audience if he brings the historical trial of Vietnam onto the stage,” Schwiedzrik asserted, “We don’t believe that.”¹⁰³ In a clear refusal of both the dryness of Weiss’ method and the informational aims of documentary theater, the directors scrawled in large letters on the back wall of their set: “Documentary theater is shit.”¹⁰⁴ They dismissed the Frankfurt production’s humanitarian emphasis, declaring “pity” to be “hardly a revolutionary sentiment.”¹⁰⁵ Instead of centering their production on what they called, the “*Humanitätsduselei*” (dreams of humanity), the pair explicitly championed “the victory of the Vietcong.”¹⁰⁶ They cut most of the play’s first half and built their production around “model situations” from Weiss’ play that they hoped could move those already sympathetic with the NLF to action.¹⁰⁷ In the words of theater critic Urs Jenny, the production aspired to transform “emotional America-opponents” into “conscious Vietcong supporters.”¹⁰⁸ Stein and Schwiedzrik did not try to present the action on stage from the perspective of the Vietnamese as Weiss had called for. Instead, they based their staging on the conceit of “a group of actors agitating on the stage, trying to achieve a relation to the long, complicated history of the Vietnamese people.”¹⁰⁹

The performance unfolded on a raised platform with a simple set that included just two pedestals, twelve chairs, and a single banner bearing a quotation from Mao. Around a table stage left sat a group of young actors discussing the ongoing struggle. In consultation with Weiss, Stein and Schwiedzrik invited Wolfgang Neuss, a well-known cabaret artist and outspoken opponent of the war, to join the cast. Neuss performed as master of ceremonies, singing songs and offering critical observations on the play. As Stein explained, Neuss added a “commentary level” to the production they hoped would clarify their “political perspective.”¹¹⁰ In one scene, as the actors sat around discussing the conflict in Vietnam at length, Neuss erupted in frustration.

¹⁰² Interview with Stein and Schwiedzrik in, Hans Bertram Bock, “Ohne Duselei: Der Vietnam Diskurs von Peter Weiss neu bearbeitet,” *Abendzeitung München*, June 24, 1968. Peter Weiss Archiv, Akademie der Künste (Hereafter abbreviated AdK-PW), Folder 2940.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Carlson, *Theatre is More Beautiful than War: German Stage Directing in the late Twentieth Century*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Schwiedzrik, in Bock, “Ohne Duselei: Der Vietnam Diskurs von Peter Weiss neu bearbeitet.”

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Wolfgang Schwiedzrik, “Theater als ‘Aktion,’” in *1968 - Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 235.

¹⁰⁸ Urs Jenny, “Fern von Weiss,” *Die Zeit*, July 12, 1968.

¹⁰⁹ Bock, “Ohne Duselei: Der Vietnam Diskurs von Peter Weiss neu bearbeitet.”

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

“Just look at these people!” he yelled, expressing his contempt for the rhetorical posturing of activists.¹¹¹ Neuss’ contribution also enlivened what he called “the bone-dry Suhrkamp-primer” that was Weiss’ original play.¹¹² To a similar end, the directors incorporated formal elements drawn from American performance groups then popular in West Germany. Several sequences of ritual-like movement in the production bore the distinct influence of the Living Theater, while inspiration for giant heads worn by performers in one scene came directly from the Bread and Puppet Theater.¹¹³ According to the directors, these additions helped transform the documentary play into a politically agitating experience. “It was,” as Schwiedzrik later noted, “very artful Agitprop-Theater.”¹¹⁴

The Munich production also featured an opportunity for audience members to provide material aide to the liberation struggle itself. During the curtain call on opening night, July 5, 1968, cast members went up and down the aisles collecting donations to buy weapons for the NLF. “Having pity is not allowed, but donating for weapons and the Vietcong is,” Neuss proclaimed while leading the collection.¹¹⁵ Schwierdzik later insisted that the collection was not a gimmick, but concretized the production’s aspiration to move beyond “discourse” and into “action.”¹¹⁶ The “*Spendaktion*” (donation-action) incensed the theater administration, who immediately sent a letter to the directors banning any future collections within the building. They cited a Munich law carrying fines of between DM 5,000 and DM 10,000, accompanied by the suggestion that any future collections take place outside, beyond the theater’s property lines.¹¹⁷ Even though the ensemble decided not to collect donations at the second performance, word of the *Spendaktion* had spread. Without solicitation, the next evening’s audience threw nearly DM 500 onto the stage during the curtain call.¹¹⁸ At the third performance on July 9, the conflict with the theater administration escalated when Neuss refused to appear onstage for than fifty minutes in protest of the ban. At the end of the performance, he delivered a lengthy diatribe to the audience announcing his decision not to extend his contract with the Kammerspiele, claiming he “had never experienced such political repression like today in this house.” According to Neuss, the *Spendaktion* was an “integral part of the staging.” Forbidding it, he explained, compromised the entire performance. Neuss’ withdrawal from the production forced the Kammerspiele to cancel the next two performances scheduled for July 17 and 18.¹¹⁹

¹¹¹ Neuss, quoted in “Mark im Hut,” *Spiegel*, July 29, 1968, 91.

¹¹² Rolf Michaelis, “Vereintheater,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 16, 1969. ADK-PW, Folder 2944.

¹¹³ Hellmuth Karasek, “Erlaubt und nicht erlaubt.” ADK-PW, Folder 2940; Kraus, *Theater-Proteste*, 145-6.

¹¹⁴ Schwierdzik, “Theater als ‘Aktion,’” 236.

¹¹⁵ “Mark im Hut,” 91.

¹¹⁶ Schwierdzik, “Theater als ‘Aktion,’” 236.

¹¹⁷ “Mark im Hut,” 91. See also “Viet Nam-Diskurs in München vorläufig abgesetzt,” *Sddeutsche Zeitung*, July 17, 1968.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ “Viet Nam Diskurs,” *Münchner Abendzeitung*, July 22, 1968. See also, “Demonstration in München für Viet Nam Diskurs,” *Welt*, July 22, 1968; “Viet Nam Diskurs – endlos?” *Sddeutsche Zeitung*, July 22, 1968; Schwierdzik, “Theater als ‘Aktion,’” 313-316.

In a lengthy editorial first published in the *Suddeutsche Zeitung* on July 20, the Kammerspiele's *Intendant* August Everding justified the ban on the grounds that Munich law prohibited the publicly subsidized theater from taking a "political position" on current affairs.¹²⁰ Permitting a collection for the NLF on Kammerspiele property, he claimed, constituted assuming such a position. Everding tied his defense to the insistence that the theater's function within a democratic society was comparable to "contributing to a discussion." It should stage an array of performances that "represent all opinions that are not totalitarian-antidemocratic." Just as "parliamentary discussion" is the "heart" of democracy, he argued, "the heart of our theater is discussion: discussion between democratically minded individuals." While radical material like Weiss' "political agitating play" should be presented on the stage, according to Everding, anything that went beyond this threatened the public service the theater was funded to perform.¹²¹

Stein and Schwierdzik responded to Everding in the *Suddeutsche Zeitung* by criticizing his "contentless concept of democracy (and the function of Theater therein)."¹²² That Everding had "tolerated" their "agitational intention," the pair declared, did not prove the theater's commitment to democracy.¹²³ While they agreed with him on the importance of discussion for democracy, they averred that "democracy is also action." To limit democracy to discussion excluded those who "not only want to postulate their solidarity with the Vietnamese people, but also want to practice it in places and areas where people are publicly assembled—a theater." They concluded, "It must frighten every halfway adjusted opportunist to the core that the NLF-collection was not only an opinion or artistic 'cornerstone,' but also a political act."¹²⁴

By July 1968, collecting donations for Vietnam was a common activist practice, having been used by the antiwar movement since at least May 29, 1967 when five university students were arrested for taking part in a *Spendaktion* at the FU.¹²⁵ Two days later, on May 31, fourteen more activists were detained at the FU when students led another collection. For many, the arrests revealed the clear limits of democratic tolerance at university campuses. By the time of the *Spendaktion* in Munich over a year later, the tactic was widely understood as a way to support the NLF while testing the tolerance of public institutions. In the wake of the Munich production's closure, theater critics like Hellmuth Karasek lamented how "conflicts over the tasks and limits of theater" had prevented the piece from being performed at all.¹²⁶ For the young directors, however, the reaction to the *Spendaktion* demonstrated the need for "the implementation of democratic relations" in the theater.¹²⁷

¹²⁰ Reprinted in August Everding, "Demokratie ist Diskussion," *Theater Heute* (September 1968): 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Reprinted in Peter Stein and Wolfgang Schwierdzik, "Demokratie ist auch Aktion," *Theater Heute* (September 1968): 2.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁵ On the history of *Spendaktionen*, see Lönnendonker, Rabehl, Staadt, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte: der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund nach der Trennung von der SPD*, 301-303.

¹²⁶ Helmut Karasek, "Die Theaterrampe als Barrikade," *Die Zeit*, July 19, 1968.

¹²⁷ Stein and Schwierdzik, "Demokratie ist auch Aktion," 3.

***Mitbestimmungstheater* and the Reconfiguration of Labor**

Stein and Schwiedzrik used their response to Everding to posit a vision of an “autonomous theater,” one that owed much to the debates on *Mitbestimmung* that had erupted after the Frankfurt premiere of *Viet Nam Diskurs*.¹²⁸ The pair hoped to “win back” a “progressive, enlightening function” for the theater, which they insisted was currently blocked by “state bureaucratic interference.” The pair echoed then-standard critiques of the theater’s “feudal structure” to call for the “creation of democratic relations in the theater itself.” Above all, they wanted to reduce “bureaucracy to a minimum,” abolish the “autocratic” rule of the *Intendant*, and shift decision-making powers on all artistic and economic matters from “financial backers” to the actual producers of theater. Such steps, Stein and Schwiedzrik argued, were necessary for transforming the theater into a “model for democratic praxis.”¹²⁹

The term “autonomous theater,” however, was slightly misleading. Although the directors wanted theater to be free of government interference, they were not willing to part with the government subsidies that made their theater possible. Like Sichtermann and Jöhler, Stein and Schwiedzrik envisioned a theater that was autonomous from the interests of “financial backers,” but not their financial support. They believed, as did many who embraced Dutschke’s call for the “long march through the institutions,” that the resources of existing institutions could be used to radically transform these same institutions from within.

Stein and Schwiedzrik wasted little time pursuing their “autonomous theater.” Six months after the forced closure of the Munich production, the pair again staged *Viet Nam Diskurs*, this time in West Berlin at the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer. As a socialist-oriented theater, the Schaubühne was far more sympathetic to the aims and methods of the ensemble than the Kammerspiele had been. But this was hardly enough to prevent tensions between the antiauthoritarian ensemble and the authority of the theater administration from emerging.

The well-documented dispute began a month before the premiere, when, on December 15, 1968, the Schaubühne opted not to extend the contracts of two technicians working on *Viet Nam Diskurs*.¹³⁰ The disgruntled workers responded by painting anti-American slogans in one of the theater’s stairwells. When they refused to remove the graffiti, the theater administration banned them from the building. The ensemble took the administration’s unilateral act as an affront to attempts at democratizing all aspects of the production process. On December 18, the directors, actors, designers, and technical personnel went on strike in solidarity with the fired technicians. They demanded the ban be lifted and the administration refrain from imposing any

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ The following details are drawn from: “Viet Nam Diskurs: Tagebuch eines Konflikts,” *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, January 29, 1969, 7-11. Kraus, *Theater-Protteste*, 149-51; Günther Grack, “Ein unordentlicher Abend,” *Tagespiegel*, January 16, 1969; Rolf Michaelis, “Vereintheater,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 16, 1969. ADK-PW, Folder 2944.

disciplinary measures in the future without consulting the theater as a whole. The administration quickly opened negotiations and rehearsals resumed.

The production opened on January 11, 1968. The performance itself was nearly identical to the staging in Munich, and also included a collection for the NLF. The militant West Berlin activist audience, however, was not content to consume the performance passively. Instead the play became an occasion for discussion and analysis. Repeated interruptions transformed the planned ninety-minute performance into a three-and-a-half hour ordeal as the audience heckled the actors and criticized the production for doing little to advance the struggle in Vietnam. Before the conclusion of the first act, one enraged performer threw his shoe at an audience member who had just insulted him for earning too much money. To some extent, the activist frustrations were justifiable. The production had become more about experimenting with the principle of *Mitbestimmung* than supporting the NLF.

These tensions were quickly overshadowed by the production's closure after just three performances. On January 16, 1969, the head of the Schaubühne gave in to the West Berlin Senate, which wanted the production canceled because of its collections for the NLF. Calling itself the "Vietnam Collective of the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer's Ensemble," the cast and crew disrupted a ballet performance at the Schaubühne on January 20, 1969 in protest, demanding the production be restored. None of the fliers detailing their grievances mentioned anything about the war in Vietnam. Instead, those demonstrating demanded their right to return to work. The theater administration responded to their entreaties by calling in the police.¹³¹

This first experiment with *Mitbestimmung* confirmed what many already knew, namely that democratizing the theater would be, as *Theater Heute* editor Henning Rischbieter had predicted, "difficult to realize."¹³² More importantly, the attempt offered a reminder that even full democratization within the theater would mean little so long as those providing and managing the subsidies could dictate the direction of a production. In a published conversation with fellow director Peter Zadek at the end of 1968, Stein conceded the limits of changing the theater as an institution without altering its funding structure. But abandoning subsidies seemed to him an impossibility for the simple fact that, as he remarked, "value-neutral, organization- and bureaucracy-neutral money" was "insanely difficult to find."¹³³

Already during the first round of *Mitbestimmung* debates in the spring of 1968, critics and sympathizers of *Mitbestimmung* alike had expressed concern over the effectiveness of *Mitbestimmung* within a theater system reliant on government subsidies.¹³⁴ While generally supportive of *Mitbestimmung*, the *Intendant* and the dramaturge of the Freie Volksbühne in West

¹³¹ Flier reprinted in "Viet Nam Diskurs: Tagebuch eines Konflikts."

¹³² Henning Rischbieter, "Einführung: Was ist demokratisches Theater?" *Theater Heute* (September 1968): 1.

¹³³ "Was kann man machen?" *Theater Heute Jahrbuch* (1968), 29.

¹³⁴ See, for example, the responses to Sichtermann and Johler featured in the April, May, and June issues of *Theater Heute*: Claus Bremer, "Wie autoritär ist das deutsche Theater?" *Theater Heute* (June 1968): 1-2; Horst Klaußnitzer, Claus Bremer, "Wie autoritär ist das deutsche Theater?" *Theater Heute* (June 1968): 1-2; Horst Klaußnitzer, "Wie autoritär ist das deutsche Theater?" *Theater Heute* (June 1968): 2; Hansjörg Utzerath and Martin Wiebel, "Theater als Produktionsbetrieb," *Theater Heute* (June 1968), 2-3.

Berlin, Hansjörg Utzerath and Martin Wiebel, accused Johler and Sichtermann of “attacking the theater-establishment with only grazing shots.”¹³⁵ They argued that Sichtermann and Johler tackled the “surface” of the problem, but ignored the “economic principle” that undergirded the system in the first place. If “the division of the means of production” in the theater remained intact, the freedom attained by dismantling “the authority-structure” of the theater would be questionable at best.¹³⁶ They went so far as to assert that democratizing efforts could even strengthen existing power structures in the theater by offering the illusion of democracy. Utzerath and Wiebel’s critique anticipated the financial pressures Stein and others would face when pursuing *Mitbestimmung* experiments in the 1970s. Nevertheless, the experiments with *Mitbestimmungstheater* in the 1970s yielded several of the most memorable productions of the postwar period and launched the careers of directors, actors, and designers who have since defined West German theater. Even though the *Mitbestimmung* model proved to be untenable within the existing system, *Mitbestimmungstheater* in West Germany did not collapse as a result of funding problems. It fell victim to the impatience of directors with collective decision-making.¹³⁷

What now seems most striking about the attempted long march through the theaters is how much the spirit of the *Mitbestimmungstheater* resonated with transformations simultaneously underway in other sectors of society. Most notably, the concept of *Mitbestimmung* became the principle of profound industrial labor reforms in the 1970s. Johler and Sichtermann’s initial use of the term owed much to the push by industrial trade unions to democratize labor relations by expanding codetermination laws first established in 1952.¹³⁸ The Work Councils Act of 1972 and the Codetermination Act of 1976 ultimately granted shared decision-making power to workers in companies with over 2,000 employees.¹³⁹ These reforms transformed hierarchical structures within businesses themselves, but fell far short of increasing worker power. For one, these laws effectively imbricated labor leadership within the ranks of employers. The legal emphasis on shared responsibility institutionalized the opportunities available to workers for contesting company decisions. From a historical perspective, the move to codetermination helped to transform the character of industrial labor relations from rigid

¹³⁵ Utzerath and Wiebel, “Theater als Produktionsbetrieb,” 2.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³⁷ See David Barnett, *Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the German Theater*; Manfred Kittel, *Marsch durch die Institutionen? Politik und Kultur in Frankfurt nach 1968*; Dorothea Kraus, “Zwischen Selbst- und Mitbestimmung: Demokratisierungskonzepte im Westdeutschen Theater der frühen Siebziger Jahre.”

¹³⁸ See Kraus, *Theater-Protteste*, 310-19.

¹³⁹ The bibliography on *Mitbestimmung* in West Germany is extensive. See, for example: John Addisson, *The Economics of Codetermination: Lessons from the German Experience* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009); Bernhard Muszynski, *Wirtschaftliche Mitbestimmung zwischen Konflikt- und Harmoniekonzeptionen : theoretische Voraussetzungen, geschichtliche Grundlagen und Hauptprobleme der Mitbestimmungsdiskussion der BRD*, (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1975). Michael Schneider, “Demokratisierungs-Konsens zwischen Unternehmern und Gewerkschaften? Zur Debatte um Wirtschaftsdemokratie und Mitbestimmung,” in *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre*, eds. Axel Schildt, et al. (Bonn: Dietz, 1993): 207-222; Bo Strath, *The Organization of Labor Markets. Modernity, Culture and Governance in Germany, Sweden, Britain, and Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996).

administration to amicable cooperation between bosses and workers. As labor historians and political scientists have argued, this type of labor reorganization suited transformations in the labor process itself, particularly the need for increased flexibility brought on by the economic crises the late 1960s and early 1970s, the ascension of finance capital, and the untethering of capital from the nation-state.¹⁴⁰

As should be clear, the principle of *Mitbestimmung* took on a very different meaning within the theater. We should not ignore, however, the connections between *Mitbestimmungstheater* and the reforms of industrial labor relations in the 1970s. For instance, both examples of *Mitbestimmung* drew on the anti-administrative and anti-statist stances generalized by the German New Left. In his study of how the “explosion” of workerist language in 1968 was “not followed by the triumph of the working class but by its gradual dissolution as a historical category,”¹⁴¹ Bo Strath points to how the seemingly radical concept of *Mitbestimmung* was filled with a political content that proved antithetical to the interests of West German workers. Business owners and government officials responded to worker demands for *Mitbestimmung* not by turning over power, but “by granting rights to *Mitarbeiter* [co-workers] to form collegial relations with management.”¹⁴² Central to Strath’s argument is the crucial role that discursive struggles over the practical meaning of concepts play in historical transformation.¹⁴³ He sees the fate of the concept of *Mitbestimmung* as exemplary of “radical class language” that was “canalized and transformed” to suit the purposes of late capitalism.¹⁴⁴

Beginning in 1968 and continuing through the 1970s, *Mitbestimmung* was a popular topic of debate in the cultural pages of West German newspapers and magazine.¹⁴⁵ Following Strath’s argument, this should give us pause to consider the discursive consequences *Mitbestimmungstheater* had on the reconfiguration of industrial labor relations during this period. In particular, it demands we reflect on how pronouncements of *Mitbestimmung* as a liberating principle in the theater could have legitimated other applications of *Mitbestimmung* that served domination. This brings us back to where this chapter began—the potential of theater as an alibi for repression. More importantly, this should compel us to more carefully examine the repressive potential of even the most radical plays and resistant modes of producing theater.

¹⁴⁰ See the essays collected in *After Full Employment. European Discourses on Work and Flexibility*, ed. Bo Strath (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000). On “flexibility” since the 1960s, see, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 2007); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1992).

¹⁴¹ Bo Strath, “The State and its Critics: Is There a Post-Modern Challenge?” in *States and Citizens*, Eds. Quentin Skinner et al. (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 171.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 171-2.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁴⁵ See the overview of these debates in Kraus, *Theater-Protteste*, 233-254.

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