Still Blind in the Right Eye? A Comparison of German Responses to Political Violence from the Extreme Left and the Extreme Right

Dr Peter Lehr, CSTPV, University of St Andrews

On the occasion of a workshop on extreme right wing terrorism in May 2011, this author tentatively argued that when it comes to countering terrorism and political violence from the extreme right and the extreme left, certain European states still tend to be 'blind in the right eye', in the sense of seriously under-estimating the threat for a variety of reasons. Two events later that year highlighted the threat posed by extreme right wing terrorism, also supporting the author's argument on the blind-sighted right eye: first, the Breivik massacre in Norway, and second, the discovery of an extreme right wing terrorist cell in Zwickau, Germany, responsible for a decade-long series of murders throughout the republic – all in all, ten murders (one Greek and eight Turkish immigrants plus one police woman) and a bombing in Cologne that injured twenty-two people, most of them of Turkish origin. The activities of the cell which called itself *National-Socialist Underground* (NSU) were originally attributed by police authorities to the Turkish mafia, under the assumption that they were connected to organized crime and a protection racket.[1] It also emerged that at least some of those murders were committed under the very noses of the authorities: members of the cell had been employed as 'contact persons' (informants) both by the German domestic intelligence service and the police. Thus, it seems that the leader of the German Green Party parliament fraction, Beate Künast, is quite right to argue that "if one really had wanted to know more, one could have known more."[2] However, complacency or even "ignorance" towards the extreme right seemed to have been the order of the day within intelligence and police forces still biased against the extreme left. Retrospectively drawing parallels to the extreme-left RAF and calling the Zwickau-based a *Brown Army Fraction* sounds a bit like a knee-jerk reaction out of guilt.[3]

If one takes a look at the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, it seems to be fair to state that while the activities of the so-called *Fighting Communist Organisations* such as the German RAF or the July 2nd Movement triggered a flurry of legislative and administrative measures with the sole purpose to crush them, activities of extreme right-wing groups usually did not lead to such responses. Instead of effectively being 'othered' (i.e. declared enemies of the state) like the extreme left wing (XLW), extreme right wing (XRW) groups seemed to have been tolerated to a certain degree, and (grudgingly) accepted as parts of the society. And

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[1] See for example the coverage in Spiegel (2011): "The Brown Army Faction: A Disturbing New Dimension of Far-Right Terror", *Der Spiegel,* November 14, at http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,797569,00.html (accessed 04/03/2012)

[2] Sueddeutsche Zeitung (2011): "Generaldebatte im Bundestag: Opposition attackiert Schroeders Extremismusklausel", *Sueddeutsche.de Politik*, November 22, at, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/generaldebatte-im-bundestag-zum-nazi-terror-opposition-attackiert-schroeders-extremismusklausel-1.1196305 (accessed 06/03/2012)

[3] So the Spiegel (2011): op. cit.

since they essentially stood for a 'strong state' and 'law and order', they even tended to be defined as belonging to 'us' – 'us' very narrowly defined here as state administration, especially police forces, and possibly the majority of the conservative mainstream of society.

Drawing on Paul Wilkinson's concept of *corrigible* and *incorrigible* terrorists, this chapter examines why German authorities still tend to be blind in their right eye, while being eagle-eyed in the left – even more than two decades after the Cold War ended. Essentially, it is argued that while extreme left-wing violence seems to directly target the political system as such, extreme right-wing violence usually does not – which may explain the absence of urgency when it comes to developing counter-measures. It is also briefly argued that as of today, Islamist groups suffer the same often-times ham-handed treatment as the extreme left for very similar reasons: after the (temporary) demise of the 'red threat', they are seen as the 'new incorrigible terrorists' which have to be crushed – if need be even in a 'no holds barred' approach. However, drawing on the official and public perceptions to the activities of the Zwickau cell, an important caveat will be added: who is seen as a 'corrigible' or 'incorrigible' terrorist depends on perceptions – and they can change. Hence, simply offering the usual argument of 'blindness in the right eye' as explanation for the state's and the public's under-reaction to XRW activities is far too simplistic, and missing some essential points.

1. Concepts and Definitions: Radicalism, Extremism, Terrorism

As most readers know only too well, defining the term 'terrorism' is not exactly a straightforward task: even under the impression of the current wave of global terrorism, it is contested due to its sensitivity, and thus, ambiguity. Somehow, one cannot avoid the impression that more often than not, terrorists get lumped together with all sorts of other 'undesirables' as a matter of convenience, and that, essentially, "terrorism is violence committed by those we disapprove of."[4] However, as the life histories of individuals like Menachem Begin, Nelson Mandela or Gerry Adams show, this disapproval may not necessarily be set in stone; or at the very least, it may not prevent negotiations from taking place, and peace from eventually breaking out. Disapproval or approval of violence thus cannot be seen as overly helpful when it comes to explaining perceptions of, and state reactions to, terrorist violence, or the crucial question why certain states tend to be blind in one eye while eagle-eyed in the other.

More helpful, especially with regard to perceptions, might be defining terrorism with a focus on its most visible part – the 'shocking' act of terrorist violence itself – because this is the part one's imagination usually latches on, more often than not helped or fuelled by widespread coverage of them in mass media. Peter Waldmann for example offers such a definition:

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[4] Whitaker, Brian (2001): "The definition of terrorism", *The Guardian,* May 7, at www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/may/07/terrorism (accessed 17/02/2012).

> "Terrorism means premeditated, systematically planned, shocking acts of violence directed against a political order from the underground. They are designed to produce a general sense of insecurity and fear, but also sympathy and support."[5]

The element of 'shock' is, as Waldmann further points out, not just a minor or random attribute of terrorist actions but a focal part of terrorist logic and strategy: the element of shock explicitly aims at generating wide-spread publicity, and is meant to guarantee that the act itself will come to the attention of the general public.[6] In this regard, Waldmann's definition mirrors the core characteristics of terrorism described by Wilkinson to set it apart from other forms of politically motivated violence:

1. Terrorism is premeditated and designed to create a climate of extreme fear;
2. Terrorism is directed at a wider target than the immediate victims;
3. Terrorism involves attacks on random or symbolic targets, including civilians;
4. Terrorism is considered as 'extra-normal', in the literal sense that it violates the norms regulating disputes, protest and dissent;
5. Terrorism is used primarily, though not exclusively, to influence the political behaviour of governments, communities or specific social groups.[7]

For our intent and purpose, Waldmann's definition and Wilkinson's elaborations are useful since they will offer us, at a later section of this contribution, a starting point for criticising the current understanding of – and thus, discourses on – XRW extremism and terrorism.

Waldmann also offers a useful and interesting categorization of terrorism, distinguishing between social-revolutionary, ethnic-nationalistic, religious and vigilantist terrorism.[8] Like all other attempts to categorize terrorism, or waves of terrorism, his categories tend to overlap. For the purpose of discussing perceptions of XRW and XLW extremism and terrorism in Germany, this does not really matter. However, we would like to draw attention to Wilkinson's two categories of "corrigible terrorists" and "incorrigible terrorists":

- "Corrigible terrorists" can be defined as those fighting for attainable, tangible goals which are negotiable in the end.
- "Incorrigible terrorists" can be defined as those fighting for ideological and 'pure' causes which are not negotiable.[9]

Of course, whether a terrorist group is seen as "corrigible" or "incorrigible", and whether its aims are perceived as attainable, tangible and, hence, negotiable or not, depends on the actor defining them. State actors – in our German context defined as consisting of the 'five powers' (legislative, executive, judiciary, mass media, economy) – tend to define terrorist groups as

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[5] Waldmann, Peter (2002): "Terrorismus als weltweites Phaenomen: Eine Einfuehrung", in Frank, Hans/Hirschmann, Kai (eds.): *Die weltweite Gefahr. Terrorismus als internationale Herausforderung.* Berlin: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz, pp. 11-26 (11) (translation PL)

[6] Waldmann, Peter (2002): op. cit., p. 12 (Translation PL)

[7] Wilkinson, Paul (2001): *Terrorism Versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response* (1st edition). London: Frank Cass, pp. 12-14

[8] For example in Waldmann, Peter (1998): *Terrorismus: Provokation der Macht.* Munich: Gerling Verlag

[9] Wilkinson, Paul (2001): op. cit.

incorrigible if they are perceived as going for the "heart of the state"[10] itself, i.e. if they aim at changing the current political system, and as corrigible if they are not perceived as a threat to the seat of power itself.

For example, ethno-nationalist groups fighting either for an autonomous region within the motherland or for a new sovereign entity are usually perceived as corrigible since their aims and objectives are ultimately seen as rational and thus open for negotiation or mitigation. The talks between the various governments of the United Kingdom and the IRA even during 'The Troubles' are a case in point. In that special case, a peace agreement could be reached in which the IRA essentially gave up their ultimate objective of a united Ireland – at least one created through the sheer force of arms – in favour of the 'ballot box' due to concessions offered by the British government. The cases of the ETA in Spain or the Corsican separatists are different though: many rounds of negotiations remained inconclusive, and, so far, an end of the struggle is not yet in sight. Nevertheless, this does not stop both sides agreeing new ceasefires and returning to the negotiation table.

In the case of the so-called *Fighting Communist Organizations* (FCO) fighting for the "overthrow of capitalist circumstances"[11] however, the very survival of the political and economic system, and thus, the heart of the state itself, is at stake – which is why bringing 'them' to the negotiation table makes far less sense than in the cases above. Thus, Western liberal democracies based on a market economy – 'capitalist states' in FCO parlance – by their very nature tend to see all those ideologically-driven socio-revolutionary terrorist groups aiming at a complete change of the political system as incorrigible, be they Anarchist, Marxist, Leninist, Maoist – or, nowadays, Jihadist-Islamist. For example, the threat posed by the anarchist terrorists to the seats of power in Europe and the United States sparked the first global war on terrorism in the time of US President Theodor Roosevelt, and even the largely rhetorical and imagined international threat posed by groups of the New Left of the 1970s/1980s – magnified by the lenses of the Cold War logic – was matched by renewed international cooperation between various police forces to crush this second attack on the heart of the state launched by socio-revolutionary movements.

Terrorism however is not the only term in need of clarification. In our context, we also encounter 'radicals' and 'extremists' from both wings of the political spectrum. And since this contribution focusses on Germany, it is only appropriate to make use of an official definition of those terms, as offered by the Landesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz, Baden-Wuerttemberg (state office for the protection of the constitution, Baden-Wuerttemberg; LfVBW). With regard to the terms 'radical' and 'radicalism', LfVBW explains that 'radical' (from Latin = root, origin) should be seen as "the description for political-ideological views or endeavours which attempt to solve societal issues and problems down to the most minute detail, i.e. with utmost zeal and single-minded uncompromising attitude. However, radical

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[10] So the title of the two volumes of Hess, Henner et al. (1988): *Angriff auf das Herz des Staates.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag

[11] See for example rafinfo.de (undated): RAF-Aufloesungserklaerung, at http://www.rafinfo.de/archiv/raf/raf-20-4-98.php (accessed 06/03/2012)

movements do not necessarily violate the principles of the liberal-democratic constitution."[12] On the other hand, 'extremists' (from Latin 'extremus' = utmost) do violate the principles of the German constitution, and are thus seen as being hostile to it. According to § 3 Bundesverfassungsschutzgesetz [13], extremist movements can therefore be defined as "endeavours which contravene the constitution or are directed against the existence or security of the Federal Republic or one of its states or aim at illegally impairing the functions of the constitutional organs of the Federal Republic or one of its states (for example, *Bundestag*, state parliaments, federal government, state governments) or its members."[14]

However, the authors of the report readily admit that the boundaries between radicalism and extremism usually are fluid – which also means that 'every-day language' does not always differentiate between 'radical' and 'extremist'. [15] And, as we shall see, this 'every-day language' also does not necessarily differentiate between radicalism, extremism, and terrorism, happily lumping them together when it suits a purpose – for example excluding 'undesirables' and their opinions from public debate on the one hand, and 'mainstreaming' desirables and their opinions on the other.

2. Patterns: XLW and XRW Extremism and Terrorism in Post-War (Western) Germany

The emergence of XLW extremism and terrorism in the Federal Republic of Germany in the late 1960s can be explained – at least in parts – by the perceived 'fascist' and 'imperialist' nature of the state on the one hand, and the brutal repression of anti-system demonstrations against the state by the police on the other. With regard to the perceived fascist nature of the state, the Federal Republic of the 1950s and 1960s was quite vulnerable to such attacks. For instance, the government of Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer included individuals with a rather dubious past.[16] Also, many judges, even those of higher courts, had started their careers during the 1930s and early 1940s, and some of them had passed equally dubious sentences, including some that had sent opponents of the regime straight to the concentration camps, or deserters to execution squads. [17] Thus, seeing the conservative Federal Republic as a continuation of the old regime by other means as the extreme left did was not that surprising.

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[12] Landesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz Baden-Wuerttemberg (2006): *Rechtsextremismus.* Stuttgart, March, p. 8 (translation PL)

[13] Law regulating the powers and responsibilities of the office for the protection of the constitution (German federal domestic intelligence service)

[14] Landesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz Baden-Wuerttemberg (2006):op. cit., pp. 8-9 (translation PL)

[15] Since 1974, offices for the protection of the constitution (Verfassungsschutzbehoerden – both federal and state-level) only use the term 'extremist' for endeavours hostile to the constitution.

[16] For example the director of the Federal Chancellery under Adenauer, Hans Globke, who was involved in the Office for Jewish Affairs during the 1930s, which included writing a commentary for the *Nuremberg Laws.*

[17] See for example the *Filbinger Affair* of 1978, in which Baden-Wuerttemberg's First Minister Hans Filbinger was accused of having been involved in four death sentences as navy lawyer, and even sentencing an artillery soldier to six months imprisonment for disobedience on 29 May 1945 – three weeks after the surrender on 8 May.

The perceived 'imperialist' nature of the West German state can be explained by its close alliance with the United States of America, and its membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Even though German troops were not deployed to Indochina, the logistical support offered to US activities in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were enough to justify this claim – at least in the opinion of the extreme left.

With regard to the perceived repressive nature of the state and the harsh treatment meted out to the extreme left as opposed to the much more lenient reaction to extreme right-wing violence, the police (over-) reaction to anti-Shah demonstrators in Berlin in June 1967 is a telling example. The brutal actions from the police as well as from Iranian Savak-agents (tolerated by the police) culminating in the death of student Benno Ohnesorg (shot by a detective inspector under dubious circumstances) were reported and sensationalized by the conservative German press in a blatantly distorted way, as we shall see later.

We do not intend to discuss the complete set of root causes of XLW extremism and terrorism in Germany at length and in detail in this contribution. Suffice it to say that while daily events in Vietnam such as the napalm-bombing of Vietnamese villages and one-off affairs such as the Shah's visit to Germany provided the motivational causes for extreme left-wing militant actions including terrorism, the death of Benno Ohnesorg could be seen as the triggering cause which "lead to the outbreak of latent conflicts"[18] and prompted many students who had been undecided to make up their mind to join anti-state XLW organizations and "to actively participate in the resistance".[19] From within the diffuse scene and concentric circles of XLW radical and extremist student movements, three groups with terrorist inclinations emerged, forming the tip – or the spearhead – of the XLW scene: first, the Red Army Faction (RAF) as the self-appointed avant-garde and embodiment of the idea of an internationalist struggle against imperialism and as the German ally of ethno-nationalist liberation movements in the Third World plus the Northern-Irish as well as the IRA; second, the *Revolutionaeren Zellen* (Revolutionary Cells, RZ) espousing a social-revolutionary strategy focussing on current and local conflicts; and third, the *Movement 2nd June* which consisted of culture-revolutionary, anarchist groups hostile to what they saw as the 'elitist arrogance' of the RAF.[20]

The history of the 'elitist' RAF which emerged in 1970 and was formally dissolved on 20 April 1998, can also be seen as a history of the rise and fall of XLW terrorism in Germany. XLW radicalism and extremism however survived – for example in the shape of the *Linke Autonome* (Autonomous Left) and so-called *Antifa* (anti-fascist) movement, followed later by anti-globalist and vaguely anarchist cells. The boundaries between (legal) radicalism and (illegal) extremism however are fluid indeed, as pointed out above: so-called 'militant actions' such as the daubing of graffiti on war memorials seem to slightly overstep the norms

[18] Claessens, Dieter/de Ahna, Karen (1982): "Das Milieu der Westberliner ‚scene' und die ‚Bewegung 2. Juni'", in Baeyer-Katte, Wanda et al. (eds.): *Analysen zum Terrorismus Band 3: Gruppen-Prozesse.* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, pp. 19-181 (72) (translation PL)
[19] Claessens, Dieter/de Ahna, Karen (1982): op. cit., p. 77 (translation PL)
[20] Scheerer, Sebastian (1984): "Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland oder: die Gefahren der "deutschen Empfindlichkeit", in Sack, Fritz/Steinert, Horst (eds.): *Analysen zum Terrorismus Band 4/2: Protest und Reaktion*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, pp. 463-469 (463)

regulating protest and dissent – and so does the torching of police vehicles or the cars of known or suspected neo-Nazis.

Interestingly, during the 1970s and 1980s when the XLW scene boomed, Nazism was seen as on its way out. The Federal Republic had moved on from the conservative era of Adenauer and was about to move from the centre-right more to the centre-left, even trying to "dare more democracy", as Chancellor Willy Brandt said. The so-called *Ewig Gestrigen* (those eternally living in the past, i.e. unreformed Nazis) were expected to pass away, and in the successful modern welfare state so dependent on export there was meant to be no need nor room for the return of old-fashioned nationalist ideas. The emergence of a new generation of 'neo-Nazis' was thus initially seen as an embarrassing aberration, affecting only a few social misfits – probably just some misguided young males spoiling for a fight. However, against all expectations and predictions, the XRW scene grew, attracting more and more mostly young male followers in addition to the known circle of elderly radical right-wing party members.

The re-emergence of XRW extremism and terrorism can at least partly be explained as a consequence of problems of adaption and integration as a result of social change in West Germany. With regard to the rapid growth of the XRW scene during the 1990s, the negative side-effects of the reunification on 3 October 1990, especially for some East German rural regions, also need to be mentioned. Here, disproportionally high rates of unemployment and rising costs of living were matched by rapid social decline and a loss of confidence in the future. Not very surprisingly, the segments of (mostly East-) German society that lost out in the reunification process and its aftermath, thus feeling excluded, were susceptible to a set of easy-to-understand explanations promising to make sense out of what was happening, and quite frequently also offering some easy-to-identify scapegoats. Examples of such crude explanations were (and still are) claims that 'they steal our jobs', with 'they' defined as immigrants, legal or not, and especially highly visible immigrants with a different culture. In the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) before reunification, these were mostly Turkish immigrants or 'guest workers', joined by Vietnamese and African immigrants to the former 'socialist' German Democratic Republic after reunification. Immigrants however do not form the only target group for XRW extremism and terrorism: anybody seen as 'not fitting in' can be a target, for example punks (also highly visible), left-wing intellectuals (journalists, teachers), gays, Sinti and Roma, foreigners in general and Jewish citizens.

After reunification, not only the number of XRW scene members grew but also the pace of XRW militant actions, as Mayer and Meyer-Rewert point out:

> "[XRW violence] still was of a rather spontaneous single-action nature, planned and carried out in a short-term fashion without any coherent strategy, but with the same motives and the same targets reappearing. However, the relentless series of attacks on facilities for asylum seekers made it difficult to analytically keep them apart: names of places such as Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Hoyerswerda or Mölln resurfaced again and again in this context."[21]

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[21] Mayer/Meyer-Rewert (2011): op. cit. (translation PL)

On the occasion of the football world championship in 2006, former speaker for the government Heye explicitly warned foreigners to stay away from certain regions of East Germany (for example Brandenburg) due to the high number of politically motivated acts of violence directed against them.[22] Indeed, although XRW activism has to be seen as a pan-German problem and not only an East German one, the percentage of those supporting extreme-right ideas tends to be noticeably higher in East Germany than in West Germany: a poll taken just prior to the world championship of 2006 for example revealed that 53 percent of East Germans agreed with anti-foreigner slogans, as compared to only 38 percent of West Germans.[23]

In 2010, the Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, BfV) reported 219 XRW organizations (2009: 195; 2008: 156) and 25,000 XRW individuals (2009: 26,000), 9,500 of whom were categorized as potentially violent.[24] The BfV also reported two trends: first, a tendency of at least parts of radical and extremist groups of the XRW scene, including neo-Nazis, to cooperate and form networks, the main objective being to coordinate parliamentarian and activist strategies. Secondly, the BfV highlighted the emergence of a loose extremist organization calling itself *Nationale Autonome* (nationalist autonomous groups, NA). The NA members' outfit does not match the usual appearance of members of the XRW scene but rather that of the extreme left-wing autonomous groups. And just like them, they make use of Anglicisms usually shunned by the extreme right, adopt similar slogans (for example, 'destroy the capitalist system'; 'fight the system, fuck the law') and demand a more aggressive stance towards the police and political opponents, including what they call 'militant actions'.[25] Their number still is rather small and estimated to be around 500, but the XRW scene seems to be getting more organized and, thus, more dangerous.

Quite remarkably however, the fact that the XRW scene also includes terrorist cells as defined by Waldmann and described by Wilkinson largely escaped public attention. Hence, Mayer and Meyer-Rewerts speak of the "forgotten terrorism" when it comes to XRW terrorist actions.[26] In August 1980 for example, members of a group called *Deutsche Aktionsgruppen* (German action groups) firebombed a home for immigrants in Hamburg, killing two Vietnamese asylum seekers. Just one month later, on 26 September 1980, a 'lone-wolf' XRW activist carried out a bombing attack targeting the famous Munich Oktoberfest,

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[22] Spiegel (2006): "Rechtsextremismus: 'Grosses Problem wird kleingeredet'", *Der Spiegel,* 21. May, at http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,417174,00.html (accessed 06/03/2012)

[23] Ibid.

[24] BfV (undated): *Zahlen und Fakten zum Rechtsextremismus: Rechtsextremistisches Personenpotenzial (Gesamtuebersicht).* Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz website, at http://verfassungsschutz.de/de/arbeitsfelder/af_rechtsextremismus/zahlen_und_fakten_2010/zuf_re_gesamt uebersicht_2010.html (accessed 06/03/2012)

[25] BfV (2009): *'Autonome Nationalisten' – Rechtsextremistische Militanz.* Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz, May, at http://verfassungsschutz.de/download/de/publikationen/pb_rechtsextremismus/broschuere_2_0905_autono me_nationalisten/thema_0905_autonome_nationalisten.pdf (accessed 06/03/2012)

[26] Mayer, Benjamin/Meyer-Rewerts, Ulf (2011): "Der vergessene Terrorismus", Goettinger Institut fuer Demokratieforschung, November, at http://www.demokratie-goettingen.de/blog/der-vergessene-terrorismus-2 (accessed 03/03/2012)

killing thirteen people and seriously injuring about 200 more. The perpetrator, Gundolf Köhler, allegedly had contacts with the notorious XRW *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann.* The same group was also mentioned with regard to the assassination of Jewish publisher Shlomo Lewin who was killed in front of his house in December of the same year.[27] In 2003, a planned bombing attack targeting the foundation-laying ceremony for a Jewish cultural centre in Munich was prevented in the very last moment[28] due to timely information from a *V-Mann* (informer) [29] : a group around neo-Nazi Martin Wiese, organized in the so-called *Kameradschaft Süd,* had already acquired the explosives necessary for the attack.[30]

Contrary to the terrorist actions of the RAF however, the XRW terror acts did not leave much trace in the public memory – not even the devastating one on the Oktoberfest, for reasons we shall endeavour to explain later. Two possible explanations that can be offered here are that those acts were committed not by one group as was the case with the RAF but by different ones, seemingly without any coherent programme or strategy, and that they did not seem to meet the definitional element of 'shock' in the eyes of the German public as the wider audience.

3. Reactions: Knee-Jerks and Bouts of Blindness

In the fight against extremism and terrorism "there should be no over- or under-reaction by the police and the judiciary", as Heitmeyer points out. Instead, "[what] is required is a credible probability of sanctions, which, however, [in the case of extremists at least committing militant actions below the threshold of terrorism] do not destroy the chances of a normal career open to all citizens."[31]

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Federal Republic of Germany witnessed a spate of terrorist attacks perpetrated by various groupings belonging to the Extreme Left, with the assassination of Rohwedder in April 1991 as the final act. Reeling under the impression of the Red Army Fraction's seemingly relentless attacks going right to the heart of the state, the German Bundestag passed a flurry of legal and institutional anti-terrorism measures aimed at improving the national intelligence and police forces' ability to cope with this unprecedented wave of terror, preferably in a pro-active way. In the haste to be seen to do something against

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[27] See Mayer/Meyer-Rewert (2011): op. cit.

[28] Sueddeutsche Zeitung (2003): "Anschlag in der Stadtmitte Muenchens geplant: Neonazis wollten juedisches Zentrum sprengen", *Sueddeutsche.de,* November 11, at http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/anschlag-in-der-stadtmitte-muenchens-geplant-neonazis-wollten-juedisches-zentrum-sprengen-1.931901 (accessed 09/03/2012)

[29] See Schallenberg, Joerg (2004): "Fuer Sprengstoff ist gesorgt", *taz.de,* November 24, at http://www.taz.de/1/archiv/archiv/?dig=2004/11/24/a0162 (accessed 09/03/2012)

[30] Mayer/Meyer-Rewert (2011): op. cit.; Krug, Alexander (2005): "Neonazis haben Material fuer Bombe gesammelt", *Sueddeutsche.de,* January 20, at http://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/lka-experte-neonazis-haben-material-fuer-bombe-gesammelt-1.672778 (accessed 09/03/2012)

[31] Heitmeyer, Wilhelm (2005): "Right-wing terrorism", in Bjørgo, Tore (ed.): Root Causes of Terrorism. Myths, reality and ways forward. London and New York: Routledge 2005, pp. 141-153 (144)

the menace, the politicians tended to ride rough-shod over certain civil liberties, thus turning the state into an 'Ueberwachungsstaat' (surveillance state) – at least from the perspective of its critics, not all of whom were from the Left.

The main triggers were the traumatic events of Germany's *Heisser Herbst* ('hot autumn') of September 1977: the kidnapping of industry representative Dr Hanns-Martin Schleyer on 5 September, the hijacking of Lufthansa flight LH181 (the *Landshut*) on its way from Palma de Mallorca to Frankfurt on 13 October, the elite GSG-9's recapture of the air liner in Mogadishu on the night of 17/18 October, the suicide of imprisoned leading RAF members in their cells in Stuttgart Stammheim prison on the same night, and the climactic murder of Dr Schleyer on the following day. The main thrust of the measures was to provide the police force with more powers for surveillance, search and arrest. Two surveillance measures stand out: *Rasterfahndung* (grid search or surveillance) and *Schleppnetzfahndung* (dragnet search or surveillance). The Rasterfahndung is a form of computer-based surveillance which filters information of certain groups of persons from public or private data bases – which may be normal today but was still in its infancy during the late 1970s. The data base had been devised by the head of the Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Criminal Office), Horst Herold, even before the traumatic events but was now able to be fully exploited:

> "Herold's data processing provided, for the first time, a system which simultaneously fulfilled two of a detective's dream: the collection of as much information as possible, and the ability to fit the individual components together in the minimum time. In 1979, a review of the system […] listed thirty-seven data files containing 4.7 million names and some 3,100 organizations. Many of these occurred several times. The fingerprints collection contained the prints of 2.1 million people. The 'personal identification centre' set up after the murder of Federal Prosecutor General Siegfried Buback in 1977 contained the names of over 3,500 people, with a short personal description of each and a list of material available for their identification such as photographs, fingerprints and handwriting tests."[32]

Schleppnetzfahndung permitted the police "to search all apartments in a block if they suspected that terrorists and hostages were there, and they were empowered to set up roadblocks to establish the identity of people passing through neighbourhoods in the vicinity of terrorist incidents."[33] Such roadblocks could also be set up on major German motor ways, for example by using one of the larger lay-bys of an Autobahn as a choke point through which all traffic had to pass.

Again, it should be pointed out that, with regard to the national-level anti-terrorism measures which found their equivalent in some Western European countries[34], all these measures came with a heavy price tag: making the state more secure also meant making it less liberal. It

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[32] Aust, Stefan (2008): The Baader-Meinhof Complex. London: The Bodley Head, p. 141

[33] Anderson, Malcolm (2000): "Counterterrorism as an Objective of European Police Cooperation", in Reinares, Fernando (ed.): European Democracies Against Terrorism. Governmental policies and intergovernmental cooperation. Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, pp. 227-243 (237)

[34] For example in Italy, where laws of an equally sweeping nature were passed to combat XLW terrorism and, especially, the Red Brigades.

needs also to be pointed out that it would be too simplistic to conclude that the main reason behind these tougher laws was the German state's bid for more power. Rather, the terrorist events described above usually resulted in a call for tougher action from a variety of sources outside of the government – including, for example, the conservative tabloid press mirroring the opinion of the conservative mainstream of society. Anderson reminds us that such overwhelming pressure leads to a phenomenon named "the politics of the last outrage."[35] As soon as the impact of the trigger event starts to wane, the political system returns to normalcy. The tougher laws however tend to remain in force – unless they are passed with a so-called 'sunset clause', i.e. an expiry date.

On the other hand, extremist and terrorist actions committed from within the rather disorganized and far less tangible XRW scene seemed to have been insufficient to create a public outrage comparable to the actions committed by groups from the other side of the political spectrum: those actions were not met by a similar flurry of legal initiatives. Of course, from a legal point of view one can argue that the laws passed to combat one form of terrorism can also be used to combat yet another. Also, one has to admit that the odd XRW group or party was banned when they too obviously overstepped the blurry boundary between radicalism (legal) and extremism (illegal). Nevertheless, the bulk of actions against the extreme right usually were (and still are) closely related to specific incidents such as neo-Nazi marches or acts of XRW violence. Counter-demonstrations were (and still are) held, and acts of solidarity with the victims were (and still are) organized. However, such counter-actions were (and still are) mostly of a short-term, ad-hoc nature, while extreme right-wing activities beyond the highly visible marches are not.[36] The XRW scene kept organizing itself in the background while the bulk of the population kept turning their eyes away.[37] One can even argue that many of the actions from the XRW scene met with tacit approval and acknowledgement – the author heard the argument that 'they only keep the streets clean from riff-raff' or 'they do what the police isn't allowed to do' quite often over the years. Even the acts of the Zwickau cell met with at least some approval, such as "too much ado about some dead Turks" or the rather popular argument that "in Germany, foreigners have already killed more Germans than vice-versa."[38] Thus, Nicola Hieke from the Bavarian state's coordination office against right-wing extremism (LKS) is quite right to argue that the fight against the right could be characterized as an attempt to extinguish fires rather than to try to durably inoculate the population against the dangers emanating from the extreme right.[39] Seemingly, it is (still) all about treating the symptoms instead of curing the disease when it comes to the XRW scene.

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[35] Anderson, Malcolm (2000): op. cit.., p. 228

[36] See Kock, Felicitas (2012): "Kein Bier fuer Nazis: Initiative von Wirten gegen Rechtsextremismus", *Sueddeutsche Zeitung,* 01 March, at http://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/initiative-von-wirten-gegen-rechtsextremismus-kein-bier-fuer-nazis-1.1296177 (accessed 01/03/2012)

[37] Ibid.

[38] See for example Prantl, Heribert (2012): "Gedenken and die Nazi-Opfer: Wahlkaempfe leben von der angeblichen Ueberfremdung Deutschlands", *Sueddeutsche Zeitung,* 23 February, at http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/gedenken-an-die-neonazi-opfer-wie-integration-endlich-gelingen-kann-1.1292062-2 (accessed 04/03/2012)

[39] As quoted in Kock, Felicitas (2012): op. cit. (translation PL)

Thus, despite the existence of XRW extremism, and even terrorism, at the same time as XLW extremism and terrorism, it is fair and accurate to say that the sole and near-exclusive driving factor behind all those rather draconian anti-terrorism laws passed in Germany were the acts of XLW terrorism – at least until very recently, when in November 2011 the spate of politically motivated murders originally ascribed to the Turkish mafia were finally correctly attributed to an XRW terror cell. Covering the news of these murders, one German journalist stated the glaringly obvious: while the German interior intelligence service (Verfassungsschutz; Office for the Protection of the Constitution) busily surveilled all critical democrats from the left, it completely ignored violent extreme right-wing activists, and even recruited some of them as informers.[40]

4. Comments: Distorted Discourses

With regard to the extreme left, the process of 'othering' them actually started early in the Federal Republic – well before the birth of XLW extremism and terrorism. We already mentioned the ham-fisted treatment meted out to anti-Shah demonstrators in Berlin in June 1967, and the reception of the events by the conservative press in Berlin and in the Federal Republic itself. In his contribution to the famous *Analysen zum Terrorismus* (volume 4/2), Fritz Sack comments on the role of the 'Springer-Presse' as follows:

> "The Springer press did not only manipulate through redactionary means and through leaving out, composing, rearranging of information, [rather] it composed, invented and lied – as long as one is prepared to already talk of 'lies' if pictures are used with the wrong text, information is presented as unassailable even in the face of massive challenges to it, [and] if information is presented with a degree of precision for which there is no official proof and which has been unofficially contradicted."[41]

To further illustrate this argument, he reminds readers of a headline of the German broadsheet *Bild Zeitung* of 3 June 1967 which read "Bloody Riots: 1 Dead", followed by the comment "A young man died yesterday in Berlin. He is the victim of riots, stage-managed by political rowdies… Noise is no longer enough for them… they want to see blood… they wave the red flag, and they mean the red flag."[42] In this short press comment, Sack already sees all necessary elements present which would determine the structure of future reporting, and which only needed some linguistic variation. For example, also on 3 June 1967, the *Berliner Zeitung* exclaims "this is terror (…) who produces terror has to accept harsh counter-measures."[43]

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[40] Prantl, Heribert (2011): "Rechter Terror und Verfassungsschutz: Wenn der Staat versagt", *Sueddeutsche Zeitung,* 17. November, at http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/rechter-terror-und-verfassungsschutz-wenn-der-staat-versagt-1.1191241 (accessed 04/03/2012)
[41] Sack, Fritz (1984): op. cit., p. 188 (translation PL)
[42] Ibid.
[43] Quoted in ibid.

This 'othering' of essentially peaceful demonstrators – which at no point during the demonstrations went beyond the limits of the German constitution – in a sort of imaginative brilliance that would have made any playwright proud was at least initially echoed even by the then Governing Mayor of Berlin, the well-respected theologian Heinrich Albertz, ironically a social democrat and thus also from the left – but not the extreme one but the 'respectable' one.[44] In the night of 2nd and 3rd June, he stated:

> "The patience of this city has come to an end. Several dozen demonstrators, among them students as well, acquired the sad merit of not only having offended and insulted a guest of the Federal Republic in the German capital, on their account also is one person dead and numerous persons injured – police officers and demonstrators. The police, provoked by rowdies, were forced to act forcefully and to make use of their batons. […]."[45]

Not surprisingly, the police of Berlin came up with a similar narrative of the events after having over-reacted in a situation they helped to create[46], putting the entire blame for the events on the – supposedly extreme left-wing – demonstrators. With regard to the police force's chosen tactics, Sack even hints at a possible 'hidden curriculum' of the police planning around the visit of the Shah as a better explanation for the over-reaction than the alleged "ineptitude of the Berlin police command" that the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* saw behind the events in July 1967.[47] In that case, this may well have been a focus on 'efficiency' of police actions to the detriment of their legality. The element of 'efficiency' is notably absent in the context of acts of XRW political violence and terrorism committed by the Zwickau cell, as we have seen, and shall see again. At the moment, all we need to do is to reiterate that even in the prelude to German extreme left-wing terrorism, the 'Movement June 2' and the RAF, the 'othering' of the extreme left wing already was in full swing.

In the context of a divided Germany and the febrile and heated atmosphere of the Cold War, the danger posed by 'world communism' in general and the 'eastern bloc' in the shape of the socialist German Democratic Republic and the USSR in particular made this 'othering' an exercise in simplicity and rhetorical elegance: all it took was a couple of key words such as 'terrorists', 'political rowdies', 'blood-thirsty', 'red flags' in order to conjure up a menace from the extreme left and to brand them as 'Vaterlandsverraeter' (traitors of the fatherland), thus denying them any legitimate space in the public political discourse – the 'gate keeper' function of the press saw to that. However, by doing so they also fuelled the radicalisation process within the extreme left in general and the student movement in particular. Hess explains the rationale behind this over-exaggeration of social-revolutionary extremism and terrorism:

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[44] Governing Mayor Albertz was later forced to resign when an investigation of the German Parliament of the events criticized his handling of them.
[45] As quoted in Sack, Fritz (1984): op. cit., p. 182 (translation PL)
[46] Sack, Fritz (1984): op. cit., p. 170
[47] Sack, Fritz (1984): op. cit., p. 179

"[In] the usual discourse of terrorism it experiences a disproportionately high and exaggerated transformation to an enormous danger for state and society. While [this form of terrorism] carries out very selective actions, in the discourse 'we all' appear to be threatened. Although especially today the essential replaceability of leaders in the state and the general complexity of our modern system renders it less vulnerable than earlier ones, the discourse only too willingly follows the illusions of the social-revolutionary actors that they could "attack the heart of the state", thus forcing it to collapse."[48]

Hess mentions two main reasons behind this over-estimation of social-revolutionary terrorism. First of all, he opines that it is indeed a serious threat to many persons occupying leading roles in economy and state: "Social-revolutionary terrorism turns them into prisoners of protective measures, thus ruining their private lives and that of their families as well. In such a situation it is understandable that they tend to generalize the danger. And since they have a huge influence on media, this interpretation is mirrored there as well."[49] Thus, Hess argues that in a certain sense, "social-revolutionary terrorism can be seen as a modern *crimen laesae maiestatis:* Even though today *maiestatis* is no longer tied in with the person but with the position, injuring a person in such a position still results in a wide-spread feeling of outrage within the population."[50]

Secondly, Hess points out that the over-estimation of social-revolutionary terrorism fulfils a series of important functions: "For example, over-exaggeration of the problem of terrorism distracts from other and more pressing problems threatening the general population. Also, the general fear of terrorism can create a mass consensus. This fear translates into a general sense of insecurity, and as a consequence, into wide-spread demands for a stronger state, and a wide-spread acceptance and legitimization of more severe laws."[51] At the same time, Hess argues, the all-pervading sense of fear opens the way for the growth of intelligence and law enforcement institutions: "For example, the budget of the BKA rose from DM 22 million in 1969 to DM 199 million in 1978, and the budget of the Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution) from DM 17 million in 1968 to 110 million in 1978."[52]

On the other hand, with regard to XRW activities, the element of *crimen laesae maiestatis* does not apply: only in a few exceptional cases were persons occupying leading roles in society targeted. Rather, the target groups were situated at the fringes of German society: legal and illegal immigrants, youth movements sporting a non-mainstream lifestyle (punks, for example), gays, Sinti and Roma. An all-pervading sense of fear thus failed to emerge, and neither was there a mass-consensus that the state should crush them as mercilessly as it had in the fight against XLW extremism and terrorism. As we already pointed out, the German

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[48] Hess, Henner (1988): "Terrorismus und Terrorismus-Diskurs", in: Hess, Henner et al.: Angriff auf das Herz des Staates, Erster Band. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, pp. 55-74 (68) (translation PL)
[49] Hess, Henner (1988): op. cit, p. 69 (translation PL)
[50] Hess, Henner (1988): op. cit, p. 69 (translation PL)
[51] Ibid. (translation PL)
[52] Ibid. (translation PL)

conservative mainstream tended to have a rather dim view of these outsiders anyway, tacitly approving, or at least not condemning, XRW militant actions targeting them – which made 'othering' the XRW scene far more difficult even for interested parties than 'othering' the XLW scene.

More often than not it was (and still is) doubted whether even the most blatant and brutal of such acts could be classified as terrorism at all – as were similar acts from the XLW. This author used the minute of silence in Germany on Thursday, 23 February 2012 in memory of the victims of the extreme right-wing terror cell of Zwickau, Thuringia, as an opportunity to discuss these activities with a group of Bundeswehr senior officers. Interestingly, the majority of the group did not think that the criteria Wilkinson developed to define terrorism could be applied to the series of murders that the Zwickau cell committed. For example, after having been introduced to Crelinsten's argument that "the victims of terrorism function as signs in a propaganda war"[53], they remained unconvinced that the murders could be seen as directed at a wider target audience than the immediate victim – rather, they saw them as criminally-motivated acts committed explicitly without the intention to be used as a kind of communication strategy within a propaganda war. Thus, they were also not prepared to accept that those acts were meant to create a climate of extreme fear, or that they were intended to influence the behaviour of a specific social group – in this context, immigrants of non-German ethnic origin: again, referring to Crelinsten[54], where was the "symbolic and instrumental" character of those acts? If even the family members of the immediate victims were uncertain whether the murders were linked to organized crime, financial debts or matters of honour, how then could the wider community they belonged to feel terrorized under the assumption that they constituted the target audience, and that their behaviour was meant to be influenced?

The same line of reasoning also led them to dismiss the above-mentioned fear of a "Brown Army Faction" forming in Germany that needed the special attention of domestic intelligence services and police forces, arguing that Chancellor Angela Merkel's knee-jerk reaction in this regard could be explained by German history rather than a viable threat to the state's security, and the general safety of its citizens. Other participants in the discussion however disagreed, drawing attention to the possibility that immigrants could perceive themselves to be under permanent pressure and being terrorized by actors remaining in the dark "in an unspectacular way such that [they] must, at any time (and now also in any place) expect to become victims of terror", thus experiencing "a 'loss of control' over their lives."[55]

We do not intend to embark on a discussion on whether the positions of the participants of this interesting and thought-provoking discussion were right or wrong. Rather, we would like to highlight the perceptions of terrorism, reflecting the terrorism discourse as such: more often than not, and in a particular German context, terrorism is when terrorists attack highly symbolic and instrumental targets in a very public and widely reported manner as the RAF

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[53] Crelinsten, Ronald (2009): Counterterrorism. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 1

[54] Ibid.

[55] Heitmeyer, Wilhelm (2005): "Right-wing terrorism", in Bjørgo, Tore (ed.): Root Causes of Terrorism. Myths, reality and ways forward. London and New York: Routledge 2005, pp. 141-153 (143-144)

did – unspectacular attacks targeting minorities do not seem to meet this criterion, and seem to remain below the radar screen of public attention. Here, the opinion of some of the group members is interesting: they opined that although the decades-long clandestine activities of XRW terrorists and extremists in certain regions resulted in 'nationally liberated zones' or 'no-go' areas for foreigners, they would still fall short of 'terrorism' in the absence of spectacular attacks against representatives of the state, and in the absence of a media strategy aiming at multiplying the effects of the attack. The activities of the Zwickau cell were therefore seen by some discussion group members as ultimately counter-productive for the XRW scene since they drew unwanted media attention to the activities of right-wing radicals and extremists in general.

In order to offer an explanation for this persistent under-reaction or blindness in the right eye, we need to return to the problem of defining terrorism. We already mentioned Wilkinson's core concepts of terrorism, which include the attack on random and symbolic targets, and also referred to Crelinsten who also emphasized the usually symbolic and instrumental character of terrorist acts. If we then close our eyes and think of any terrorist attack that readily comes to our mind, we would probably arrive at a definition of terrorism similar to Waldmann's we quoted in the introduction.

Heitmeyer, discussing Waldmann's definition in his contribution on right-wing terrorism to Bjørgo's volume, draws our attention on the definitional elements "use of violence" and "impact of shock."[56] When it comes to public perceptions, and the impact of shock within the general population plus the creation of a general sense of insecurity and fear, this is clearly present in the 9/11 attacks, or London 7/7. Here, the feeling that 'it could have been me' is very visible. If we consider the reporting of the events in German and non-German mass media, it is also present, in the context of the German RAF, in the high-profile killings and assassinations of well-respected and well-known pinnacles of society such as Siegfried Buback (7 April 1977), Juergen Ponto (assassinated 30 July 1977), Hanns-Martin Schleyer (killed 18 October 1977 after having been abducted on 5 September), Alfred Herrhausen (assassinated 30 November 1989) or Detlef Karsten Rohwedder (assassinated 1 April 1991). Here, the element of general insecurity and fear consists of the perceived inability of the state to stop this wave of terrorist violence.

However, as already mentioned above, this is not necessarily the case when it comes to acts of violence directed against targets not commonly seen as symbolic and instrumental. Since it is neither the state itself nor the population at large that is targeted, be it directly or at least as 'wider audience', the elements of 'impact of shock' and 'general feeling of insecurity and fear' are either not present at all or are at least rather muted. This seems to be reflected by the reporting of such incidents in the press: if they are reported at all, media interest dies down rather quickly. But what is right for the general population and mass media does not necessarily need to apply to certain communities or specific social groups: they might feel terrorized by acts of violence that fall short of the 'shocking', highly visible, and more often than not spectacular nature of 'normal' acts of terrorism directed against symbolic and

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[56] Heitmeyer, Wilhelm: op. cit., p. 141.

instrumental targets; and they might feel terrorized by acts of violence that do not attempt "to exploit the media in order to achieve maximum attainable publicity as an amplifying force multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience(s) in order to reach short- and midterm political goals and/or desired long-term end states."[57]

We already referred to Heitmeyer's position on that: given a credible threat potential, terrorism can also occur in an unspectacular way – not necessarily reported by the national or international press, but nonetheless resulting in the victims' 'loss of control' over their own lives. Thus, Heitmeyer convincingly argues that

> "the definitional framework, which primarily focuses on the spectacular act, and which can also be objectively identified, be extended to include the subjective side of the victims' groups in order to concentrate more on the political interactions. This also means looking at terror not only as an act, but seeing it as a process that is apt to change discourses, everyday life and public order in a society."[58]

Within the confines of terrorism studies, seeing terrorism as a process is not such a novelty any longer – here, the awareness is present that the violent act as such only represents the tip of the terrorist iceberg. It is doubtful whether this is also the case outside this rather small group of experts, and especially within the broader population. As Nicola Hieke from the Bavarian coordination office against right-wing extremism pointed out[59], people still need to be inoculated against the dangers emanating from this milieu – which can be framed in terms of a process aimed at changing discourses, everyday life and public order. The understanding that terrorism is actually a process might also lead to the realization that for certain communities or specific social groups, the 'climate of extreme fear' Wilkinson included in his core elements of terrorism may well be a permanent one – one that might not dissipate when the memories of the latest terrorist spectacular fade away. Heitmeyer explains why such a change in perceptions matters:

> "If a central criterion of terror consists in placing people in a permanent state of fear so that they must expect an attack at any time, then the attacks by groups of right-wing youths should be included in the analysis. They use terrorist means, thereby severely limiting the freedom of movements of others. Certain urban neighbourhoods or locations are turned into 'zones of fear'. This is achieved by the simple numerical superiority of those who sometimes threaten and sometimes use violence against their victims who are clearly at a disadvantage. However, what distinguishes these groups

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[57] Bockstette, Carsten: *Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques.* George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies No 20, 2008, pp. 1-28

[58] Heitmeyer, Wilhelm: "Right-wing terrorism", in Bjørgo, Tore (ed.): Root Causes of Terrorism. Myths, reality and ways forward. London and New York: Routledge 2005, pp. 141-153 (144)

[59] As quoted in Kock, Felicitas: "Kein Bier fuer Nazis: Initiative von Wirten gegen Rechtsextremismus", *Sueddeutsche Zeitung,* 01 March 2012, at http://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/initiative-von-wirten-gegen-rechtsextremismus-kein-bier-fuer-nazis-1.1296177 (accessed 01/03/2012)

from classical terrorist formations is that they do not act covertly and for this reason rarely use firearms or explosives."[60]

That conventional definitions of terrorism may not be suitable to cover current XRW manifestations of political violence is an interesting and compelling position. This position is also held by the *Spiegel* in an argument that deserves to be quoted at length:

> "Until now, only two forms of political terrorism have existed, whether it was committed by people on the left or the right or by Islamists. One involved the "propaganda of the deed," as the 19th-century French anarchist Paul Brousse dubbed his concept, which was later perfected by Russian and Italian anarchists. According to Brousse, deeds were meant to speak for themselves and be self-explanatory for the masses. Words merely deprived deeds of their power. The second approach merely requires the deed as a template for the declarations, manifestos and claims of responsibility that follow. For each of its attacks, Germany's Red Army Faction wrote a long letter in which it explained why a particular high-ranking political or business figure supposedly deserved to die. Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden regularly explained himself in video messages and called for attacks on the West."[61]

In their decade-long killing spree however, the Zwickau cell however followed neither approach, as the *Spiegel* points out. First of all, since their acts obviously did not speak for themselves to the extent that they were attributed to the Turkish mafia, their acts were clearly not meant to be seen as self-explanatory propaganda of the deed in the hope of triggering a wave of copy-cat attacks from like-minded groups. And secondly, the absence of any written or other claims of responsibility or explanatory letters indicates that the deeds themselves were also not meant as vehicles for publicizing their political demands. Hence, no supporter base could emerge publicly justifying and defending their actions. And although it indeed guaranteed the survival of the cell for more than a decade, "it came at the cost of no one understanding the racist motivations for their alleged deeds."[62]

Why the Zwickau cell chose to go public and release a 15-minute video "apparently intended to ignite the next stage, a propaganda campaign, after 13 years of silent terror"[63] remains uncertain, and we can only speculate with the *Spiegel* that they finally "felt strong enough to take on all society"[64] as the RAF did from the start. Ironically, this move to the next stage would have finally ticked the remaining boxes of "directed against a wider audience" and "creating a climate of extreme fear" – crucial elements for discerning terrorism from other forms of political violence according to Wilkinson. Supported by a suitable media strategy, we have no doubt that their acts would then have been readily attributed in the public

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[60] Heitmeyer, Wilhelm: op. cit., p. 144.

[61] Spiegel (2011): "The Brown Army Faction: A Disturbing New Dimension of Far-Right Terror", *Der Spiegel,* November 14, at http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,797569,00.html (accessed 04/03/2012)

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid

[64] Ibid.

perception with the other crucial element of terrorism that Waldmann mentioned: 'shocking violence'.

This brings us to what may be our most contentious argument: the under-reaction of both state and the public to XRW terrorism as opposed to the over-reaction to similar acts from XLW terrorism cannot and should not be explained in terms of 'being blind in the right eye' in the sense of tolerating it to a certain degree alone – that would seem to be too simplistic, convenient and ultimately reductionist. Rather, we contend that it is also a matter of state and public perceptions and understanding of terrorism. As the cases of Menachem Begin, Nelson Mandela or Gerry Adams demonstrated, the definition of who is a terrorist can change. After all, terrorism still is a label we attach or not to acts of violence depending on whether we approve or disapprove.

This being the case, and by logical extension, we can play the same game with the concept of 'corrigible' and 'incorrigible' terrorists. As we already argued with Hess, given the essential replaceability of leaders and the general complexity of our modern system, the very idea of attacking the heart of the state with any chance of success seems to be an illusion and a convenient construct used for creating a mass consensus rather than reality.[65] Hence, the notion of 'corrigible' and 'incorrigible' is also based on perception rather than being anchored in some measurable reality. The constructedness of the notions of 'corrigible' and 'incorrigible' also explains why the activities of the Zwickau cell caused the whole spectrum of the German XRW scene to be suddenly promoted to the status of 'incorrigible' after having been ignored for so long.

5. Conclusion: The 'Politics of the Last Outrage' Reloaded

So, what then explains the under-reaction of the German state and public to the activities of XRW extremists and terrorists for several decades? First of all, we would argue that prior to reunification, the XRW scene did not seem to pose a real threat: in general, they were seen as disorganized, somewhat dull, and of nuisance value rather than a real threat. The intellectually very articulate XLW scene, however, seemed to be of a completely different calibre, especially so in the context of the Cold War when all manifestations of XLW radicalism, extremism and terrorism could easily be seen as an existential threat. Thus, with regard to perceptions and discourses of terrorism during the Cold War, one could argue, somewhat ironically, that compared to the XRW scene, extreme left-wing extremists and terrorists suffered from the absence of what is called, in the context of asymmetric warfare, a 'level playing field': in the public eye, the global enemy was the Soviet Union and World Communism, not Fascism/Imperialism. Thus, the thematic issues used for 'othering' revolved around Communist themes, including 'fifth columns' fighting on behalf of the Eastern Bloc. Why, otherwise, would 'they' call themselves 'Red Army Fraction'? With regard to consensus building, this 'red threat' and the public branding of the whole Left as

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[65] Hess, Henner (1988): op. cit, p. 69

'(incorrigible) terrorist' was eminently useful for the state, and for the mainstream conservative mass media as well, since it helped to distract from other and more pressing problems threatening the general population, as Hess pointed out.[66]

When XLW terrorism finally bowed out in April 1998, a new threat had already appeared on the horizon: the threat of global and equally 'incorrigible' terrorism in the shape of Al Qaeda and Salafism-Jihadism. In the admittedly very different context of radicalisation and de-radicalisation, Githens-Mazar and Lambert argue rather convincingly that a similarly distorted terrorism discourse in the form of 'conventional wisdom' and assumptions again suited both the government and main-stream media: it enabled those interested parties to credibly demonstrate how even a 'good Muslim boy' can be led astray, morphing from 'good Muslim boy' to 'terrorist' rather quickly under the influence of blame factors such as ideology, alienation, lack of integration, personal influence of 'preachers of hate' or the Internet – thus again avoiding having to discuss awkward issues such as the influence of foreign policy decisions.[67]

Above, we already referred to Anderson's concept of the 'politics of the last outrage'. In Germany, the last outrage related to global Islamist terrorism is in the distant past, and, whether for good or bad reasons, Islamist terrorism is not seen as a credible 'clear and present danger' any longer. For the purpose of consensus building, it has lost its allure. The XLW scene is largely dormant, except for the militant actions already mentioned, and the rather ritualistic clashes with the police, for example on Labour Day. When it comes to extremism and terrorism, the XRW scene is the only credible contender for domestic security consensus building at the moment. However, this might be a bit too cynical a view, especially against the backdrop of dwindling budgets even for intelligence and police services in the current climate of financial austerity: utilizing an "all-pervading sense of fear" to "open the way for the growth of intelligence and law enforcement institutions" as Hess argued in the context of the fight against the RAF[68] is simply out of the question, which translates into fewer and fewer staff having to do more and more work. Also, the sense of moral outrage (and guilt) within the political elite across basically all German democratic parties seems to be genuine. One way or another, sight has been restored to the right eye at least for the moment, and that is not a bad thing at all.

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