

**THE SCOURGE OF
TERRORISM FROM THE
MIDDLE AGES TO THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

THE SCOURGE OF TERRORISM FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY?

MARIAN LEIGHTON



Universal-Publishers
Irvine • Boca Raton

*The Scourge of Terrorism from the Middle Ages to the Twenty-First Century:
Who, What, When, Where, Why?*

Copyright © 2023 Marian P. Leighton. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Universal Publishers, Inc.
Irvine • Boca Raton
USA • 2023
www.Universal-Publishers.com

ISBN: 978-1-62734-447-0 (pbk.)
ISBN: 978-1-62734-448-7 (ebk.)
ISBN: 978-1-62734-449-4 (aud.)

For permission to photocopy or use material electronically from this work, please access www.copyright.com or contact the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. (CCC) at 978-750-8400. CCC is a not-for-profit organization that provides licenses and registration for a variety of users. For organizations that have been granted a photocopy license by the CCC, a separate system of payments has been arranged.

Typeset by Medlar Publishing Solutions Pvt Ltd, India
Cover design by Ivan Popov

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Leighton, Marian, 1942- author.

Title: The scourge of terrorism from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century: who, what, when, where, why? / Marian Leighton.

Description: Irvine: Universal Publishers, 2023. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023026009 (print) | LCCN 2023026010 (ebook) | ISBN 9781627344470 (paperback) | ISBN 9781627344487 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Terrorism--History.

Classification: LCC HV6431 .L447 2023 (print) | LCC HV6431 (ebook) | DDC 363.325--dc23/eng/20230613

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023026009>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023026010>

*To my beloved children: Melanie,
Russell, Valerie, Kimberly, Adam,
and my grandchildren.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>IX</i>
CHAPTER 1	
The Heyday of Terrorism During the Cold War	1
CHAPTER 2	
The Central Role of the Palestinians in Terrorism	89
CHAPTER 3	
The Terrorists Behind Lockerbie.....	113
CHAPTER 4	
Russian and Soviet Bloc Support for Terrorism	117
CHAPTER 5	
The Decline of Left-Wing Terrorism.....	141
CHAPTER 6	
Domestic Terrorism in the United States Pre-9/11	145
CHAPTER 7	
From Marxism to Islamism: The New Paradigm of Terrorism	177
CHAPTER 8	
The Elusive Peace Dividend and the Prelude to 9/11	201

CHAPTER 9
Twenty-First-Century Terrorism: Al Qaeda and the Islamic
State (ISIS).....241

CHAPTER 10
Terrorism’s Global Battlefield279

CHAPTER 11
Iran’s Sponsorship of Islamist Terrorism.....307

CHAPTER 12
Afghanistan Redux.....319

CHAPTER 13
Current Perspectives on the Terrorist Threat337

Endnotes.....353

INTRODUCTION

- During the past few years, a pandemic convulsed the world, the United States endured its most contentious presidential election in history, the frequency and intensity of environmental disasters increased, and social justice warriors sparked demonstrations and protests across the globe. Terrorism as an international issue appeared to fade into the background as nations focused on other priorities. But jihadists and their enablers remain poised to wreak havoc at times and places of their choosing and to surmount obstacles standing in their way.
- With the aid of 20/20 hindsight, what is likely to transpire going forward as the struggle against terrorism continues?

This book is designed to offer an historical journey across the terrorist landscape and to provide insights and analyses of the successive waves of terrorism and their continuing challenges.

Terrorism in its various iterations goes back millennia. In the first century A.D., a Jewish millenarian sect known as the Zealots used daggers to slit the throats of Roman centurions and their Jewish *col-laborators*. Their rebellion was both political and religious in nature, and they died as martyrs at Masada rather than submit to the Roman occupation of Judea.

In the 12th century, the legendary Islamic warrior Hassan ibn al-Sabah built his castle in what is now northwestern Iran and dispatched members of his sect, known as the Assassins, to topple regimes in Persia, Iraq and Syria. The literal Arabic translation of “assassin” is “hashish eater” and referred to the acts of ritual

intoxication that warriors performed prior to embarking on their deadly missions:

To ensure the loyalty of his followers ... [al-Sabah] constructed a beautiful garden complete with streams, waterfalls and delicately scented flowers ... Al-Sabah would bring his potential killers, who had been smoking hashish, to the garden, where they would be plied with food and women in an attempt to bring to life the Quranic descriptions of Paradise. Two days later, al-Sabah would summon them and explain that ... they had been specially chosen for a dangerous mission from which they might not return. But ... if they were killed, they would go straight to Paradise.¹

Al-Sabah called his followers *fedai* or *fedayeen*, a term adopted centuries later by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a collective *nom de guerre* for “men who embark on a suicidal mission.” An Israeli counterterrorism expert observed that drug capsules are often found on the bodies of dead or captured Arab guerrillas. He remarked that “these pills are regularly issued to the *fedayeen* and also to some regular Arab army men ... to put these fighters into ... a mood of exaltation, of fearlessness of death.”²

The word “terrorism” entered the political lexicon during the French Revolution that broke out in 1789. During the Jacobin “Reign of Terror” from March 1793 to July 1794, Maximilien Robespierre guillotined about 12,000 alleged counter-revolutionaries. (The year 1989, the *anno mirabilis* in which the nations of the Soviet bloc regained their freedom, was the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution.)

Terrorism has sometimes changed the course of history. For example, the assassination of Tsar Alexander II by the People’s Will (*Narodnaya Volya*) movement helped pave the way for the Russian Revolution of 1905 and, ultimately, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. (Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin’s brother was hanged in 1887 for his role in manufacturing bombs for the People’s Will.) And the 1914 murder in Sarajevo of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to Emperor Franz Joseph II of Austria-Hungary, set in motion a series of European alliances that triggered World War I. The killer, Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip, sought to liberate the Balkans from the Habsburg Empire.

Explosives have traditionally been the signature weapon of terrorists. It is no coincidence that the era of modern terrorism began at almost the same time—1867—when Alfred Nobel invented dynamite. Terrorism is often called “propaganda by deed”—violent actions by individuals or groups who believe that their objectives cannot be achieved through political channels or other peaceful means.

The first wave of terrorist violence in Europe and America lasted almost 40 years, from the late 1870s to the eve of World War I. The heyday of international terrorism in the 20th century began, however, with the skyjackings in the 1960s by Arab factions airing their grievances against Israel and its chief ally, the United States. During the next 30 years, terrorist groups, mainly in the Middle East and Europe but also as far afield as Latin America and Southeast Asia, engaged in murderous campaigns against established governments. Their objectives mostly involved the resolution of nationalist and ethnic grievances. In the 1990s, a new form of terrorism appeared, with a heavy religious component and a goal of attacking the United States (the “far enemy”) in retaliation for its support of corrupt Arab regimes (the “near enemy”) and its troop deployments to the Middle East. The apotheosis of this radical Islamic terrorism was the attack on 9/11 against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The word “terror” derives from the Latin *terrere*, meaning “to frighten.” Lenin stated matter-of-factly that “the purpose of terror is to terrorize.” According to an old Chinese axiom, “kill one, frighten ten thousand.” The seeming randomness of many attacks is one of the most frightening aspects of terrorism.

The most widely accepted definition of terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against civilians or non-combatants by subnational groups or clandestine agents in order to create fear and intimidation and ultimately to destabilize governments and produce political change.

Terrorism is a tactic employed by the weak against the strong and aims to induce a targeted government to over-react and thus forfeit public support. The fact that terrorists have political objectives differentiates them from violent criminals.

Individuals or groups who are unable to challenge the state on a conventional military level may resort to terrorism. By engaging in asymmetrical warfare, terrorists offer David an opportunity to vanquish Goliath.

Terrorists place themselves above any moral code; for them, the end justifies the means. Former West German terrorist Michael “Bommi” Bauman said that

having a pistol in your belt gives you a feeling of superiority ... Even the greatest weakling feels stronger than Muhammad Ali. All you have to be able to do is crook your finger. Any idiot can do that.³

For state sponsors, terrorism has been a useful tactic for attacking real or perceived enemies while maintaining plausible deniability. The major state sponsors during most of the mid-to-late 20th century were Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Cuba, Iran, and North Korea. Various Palestinian groups launched attacks both in their own name and as surrogates for states or even other terrorist organizations. The Soviet Union and its East European client states played a significant but often hidden role in support of terrorism.

Terrorism to some extent is political theater and therefore requires public attention for its success. Recall the meme “What if they held a war and nobody came?” Terrorism expert Brian Jenkins declared that “terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening but not a lot of people dead.” He claimed that terrorists often choreographed their attacks to attract coverage from the press, television and, more recently, social media. Postulating a symbiotic relationship between terrorist groups and the media, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stated that the media supplied “the oxygen of publicity on which [terrorists] depend.” And Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu declared that “unreported, terrorist acts would be like the proverbial tree falling in the silent forest.”⁴

Reflecting on the 1972 massacre at the Munich Olympics that he helped to orchestrate, Abu Daoud claimed that the murder of eleven Israeli athletes before the horrified eyes of millions of viewers “forced our cause into the homes of 500 million people.”⁵ When Carlos “the Jackal” kidnapped the oil ministers attending a meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1975 in Vienna, he awaited the arrival of TV camera crews before leaving the building with his hostages.

Carlos, apparently unconcerned whether the publicity was positive or negative, reportedly clipped and translated every newspaper

account about his deeds. “The more I’m talked about, the more dangerous I appear. That’s all the better for me,” he boasted.⁶ Similarly, when Ramzi Yousef, the alleged mastermind behind the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, was apprehended in Pakistan, police found among his possessions a collection of newspaper articles detailing his exploits.⁷

After Islamic radicals stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979, seizing 52 hostages, a sullen mob outside the building suddenly came to life when a team of photographers from the Canadian Broadcasting Co. arrived. As soon as the cameras began rolling, the demonstrators began shouting “Death to [Jimmy] Carter! and burning American flags.”⁸

Terrorism has been directed much more against democracies than against dictatorships, at least partly because authoritarian and totalitarian regimes are harder to penetrate than open societies and are also more ready and willing to take forceful action against terrorism. A commentator observed that “conditions are appalling in the Soviet Union and in China, but there is no terrorism.”⁹ (Post-Soviet Russia, however, endured terrorist attacks from *jihadists* based in Chechnya and other Muslim-majority regions of the Russian Federation.)

Finally, terrorism is low-cost and low-tech. Expenditures for 9/11, for example, totaled only about \$500,000, while the financial loss to the United States ran into the billions of dollars. Especially when compared with conventional warfare, the costs of a terrorist campaign (including weapons, recruitment, and training) are extremely modest.

Despite causing human casualties and property damage, terrorist organizations have been singularly ineffective as a means of seizing power, effecting social transformation, or permanently destabilizing nations. In the United States, for example, terrorism has been more of a nuisance than an existential threat.

What is the allure of terrorism? Why do people join terrorist groups?

Dr. Marc Sageman, author of *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, told a Congressional subcommittee that joining a terrorist organization is “about young people trying to be heroes.” He added that the profile of an Islamic terrorist was shifting from intellectuals and Muslim scholars to unmarried, less educated people in their ’20s “driven by dreams of glory or a sense of

becoming significant.”¹⁰ This was the phenomenon of “ego-terrorism” or ego-tripping. The vetting and initiation rites that precede membership in a terrorist organization may also resemble those of a fraternity whose members share codes and sensitive information and pledge to protect them from outsiders.

The social and emotional appeal of extremist groups is at least as important as their ideology. Terrorist organizations, like gangs, provide an opportunity for personal and social bonding. Group dynamics rank as equally important as political or social grievances or economic privation. Some terrorist wannabes are even influenced by cultural fads such as “gangsta rap.”

Many people who once may have turned to Communism or other radical left-wing movements to satisfy their political or social needs later increasingly found refuge in Islamist groups that not only offered a worldview fetishizing violence but also held out the prospect of an entrée to paradise and access to 72 virgins.

Group loyalty often constituted the primary motivation for conducting a terrorist operation. In many cases, a would-be member was required to perform an act of violence in order to establish his *bona fides* and prevent the betrayal of the group to the authorities.

A terrorist organization incorporates some characteristics of a secret society: it is small (to facilitate internal discipline and impede infiltration), conspiratorial in nature, and demanding of loyalty and obedience. Such an organization holds a special appeal for alienated people who fail to find a niche that they regard as commensurate with their abilities or educational background. Especially for discontented intellectuals, membership in what they perceive as an elite group enhances self-esteem. The pedigree of most of Europe’s left-wing terrorists reflected middle-class alienation and angst rather than third-world destitution.

Since the inner circle of a terrorist organization is small, it depends upon a base of supporters and sympathizers. The general pattern consists of a set of concentric circles radiating outward from a tiny cell of planners and decision-makers to a broader pool of reliable operatives to an outer ring of supporters that provide financial and logistical services and generate publicity but otherwise pursue normal lives.

CHAPTER 1

THE HEYDAY OF TERRORISM DURING THE COLD WAR

The first wave of anti-Western terrorism dates from the late 1960s, a time when demonstrations against the Vietnam War roiled the United States and Europe while Israel's defeat of Arab armies in the Six-Day War drove Palestinian organizations to seek vengeance. This brand of anti-American and anti-Israeli terrorism, egged on by the Soviet Union, flourished during the 1970s and into the 1980s. The period also witnessed the blossoming of the counterculture (sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll) in both Europe and the United States.

The most significant left-wing terrorist organizations in Western Europe were the Red Army Faction in West Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy. Their names, like those of terrorist organizations elsewhere (think Irish Republican Army and Japanese Red Army) reflected their paramilitary orientation. The RAF's logo, for example, was a Kalashnikov assault rifle superimposed on a five-point star.

A commentator wrote that

... the actions of the Red Brigades or the *Rote Armée Fraktion* can be called acts neither of desperation nor of weakness, for they are perpetrated in countries which exemplify the parliamentary alternatives that allow for political change ... by non-violent means, and they are largely carried out by wealthy middle-class individuals.¹¹

BAADER MEINHOF GANG/RED ARMY FACTION

The Red Army Faction (*Rote Armée Fraktion*) was an outgrowth of the radical leftwing student protest movement that rocked the Western world and had a disproportionately severe impact on West Germany. The RAF, whose hard-core membership probably never exceeded 60, made its debut as the 2 June Movement, named for the date when police in West Berlin killed an unarmed student, Benno Ohnesorg, during demonstrations against the Shah of Iran's visit in 1967. It later came to light that the shooter, Karl-Heinz Kurras, was working on behalf of the *Stasi*, East Germany's Ministry of state Security, as an apparent *agent provocateur*. A *New York Times* article stated that

Mr. Ohnesorg's death had a powerful mobilizing effect. The photograph of a woman cradling his head as he lay on the ground is among the most iconic images in Germany. Average students who might never have joined the 1968 protest movement were moved to action. And on a darker note [the shooting] became the chief justification for violent action by terrorist groups like the Red Army Faction and the Second of June Movement.¹²

On 2 June 1968, Andreas Baader and his girlfriend, Gudrun Ensslin, firebombed two prominent department stores in Frankfurt. Baader reportedly sought to "liberate his countrymen from consumerism and sexual repression."¹³ "Bommi" Baumann described Baader as "a weapons maniac [who] developed an almost sexual relationship with pistols (the Heckler and Koch type in particular)." He quoted Baader as musing that "fucking and shooting [were] the same thing."¹⁴ Another observer wrote that Baader was "less interested in ideology than in perfecting a style of leather-jacketed, Marlon Brando cool ... a rebel with any cause that [happened] to come in handy."¹⁵ Commenting on the Baader-Meinhof Gang and its successor, the Red Army Faction, one author wrote:

To say that they had an ideology would be an overstatement, as their guiding principles seemed to be a kind of cafeteria-style reference to ideas from Marxism-Leninism ... anarchism, and the philosopher Frantz Fanon's theories about the beneficial, cleansing role of violence.¹⁶

Ensslin's father, a Lutheran pastor, was "astonished ... that Gudrun, who has always thought in a very rational, intelligent way, has experienced what is almost a ... euphoric ... self-realization."¹⁷ During court testimony, Ensslin proclaimed that "I'm not interested in burnt mattresses [a reference to her arson]. I only want to talk about the burned children in Vietnam."¹⁸ After visiting her daughter in prison, Ensslin's mother declared: "I feel that by her act, she did something liberating ... for our family."¹⁹ A *Washington Post* reporter recalled Gudrun as "[someone who] leaves her baby to join what she perceives as the morally righteous vanguard against imperialism and the creeping re-Nazification of the German government."²⁰

On 14 May 1970, Ulrike Meinhof, a prominent leftwing journalist and former secret member of the East German Communist Party who published a party-financed magazine called *Konkret*, helped Baader escape from prison. Meinhof subsequently deserted Klaus Rainer Röhl, her wealthy playboy husband and father of her twin daughters, to join forces with Baader. Together they founded an underground cell dedicated to exposing the alleged fascists in the West German government and plotting a revolution to destroy the U.S.-German alliance. German media subsequently coined the term "Baader-Meinhof Gang" for this first generation of the RAF. Röhl disclosed in his memoirs, published in 1975, that the Baader-Meinhof Gang received Soviet funds channeled through East Germany and Czechoslovakia.²¹ The group reportedly had 20–30 hardcore members.

In June 1970, members of the Baader-Meinhof Gang flew from Communist East Germany to the Middle East, where they attended a military training camp in Jordan under the auspices of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The camp was operated by Fatah, the main faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The commander of the facility was Abu Hassan (known as "the Red Prince"), the director of Fatah's secret service and a close associate of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat.

The German trainees revealed both their arrogance and their bourgeois attitudes:

... There was a minor moment of feminist assertion when, to the incredulity of the Algerian camp commander, Baader and Ensslin insisted on men and women sharing sleeping quarters. Rations were primitive: tinned meat, rice and flat bread.

One of the German women asked whether a Coca-Cola machine could be made available, a request met with more disbelief by the Arab hosts.

Author Michael Burleigh described the routine at the training camp:

Each day began at 6 a.m., with a long run and then practice with rifles, submachine guns and Kalashnikov AK-47s. A fatal accident was narrowly averted as Ulrike Meinhof tried a Russian hand grenade; she unscrewed the cap and then pulled the ring, without grasping the point that she was supposed to throw the already fizzling object Inevitably there was trouble between the German amateur terrorists and the Fatah professionals. The Germans fired ammunition so profligately that they had to be restricted to ten rounds a day They then went on a protest strike. Fatah fighters were shocked to see ... young German women sunbathing naked on the roof of their quarters, an uncommon sight in their milieu. When the Germans persistently interrupted a lecture by the visiting PLO commander ... he had them disarmed and put under armed guard.

As a final improbable flourish, Meinhof inquired whether the PLO had an orphanage where she could stash her twins, who were staying with German hippies to keep them from their father's custody.²²

By the mid-1970s, practically every known German terrorist had undergone some training in Palestinian camps in the Middle East. West German terrorist organizations also made extensive use of Arab countries as rear bases "when Europe got too hot" as a result of police pressure.²³

Members of the RAF, like those of some other European terrorist groups, began their careers as idealistic pacifists opposing "imperialism" and "monopoly capitalism." They were mostly middle- or upper-class men and women seeking to overturn the bourgeois Establishment and lead a revolution in solidarity with the working class. When the workers proved unresponsive to their blandishments, they turned to violence. More than 80 bombings and arson assaults occurred in West Berlin alone in 1970, including simultaneous robberies of ten

banks on a single day. During the following years, the number of terrorist incidents in West Germany rose into the hundreds.

The RAF committed about 50 murders, including the killing of prominent German business and political leaders, and also conducted a spate of bombings and arson against such targets as police headquarters in Munich and Augsburg and the conservative Axel Springer Publishing House in Hamburg. In addition, it unleashed violent attacks against U.S. military installations in West Germany to protest American “imperialism” and the “genocide waged in Vietnam.”²⁴ On 11 May 1972 the Baader-Meinhof Gang bombed the officers club at the headquarters of the 5th Army Corps in Frankfurt am Main, killing one officer and wounding 13 servicemen. On 24 May, Andreas Baader and Holger Meins planted bombs in cars outside the U.S. Army’s European Headquarters in Heidelberg. The resulting explosions killed three American soldiers and injured eight. An RAF communiqué claimed that the bombings were acts of protest “against mass murder in Vietnam.”

The terrorists escalated their bloody anti-Western campaign after Baader, Meinhof and two of their associates were captured in 1972, put on trial, and imprisoned. In 1974, Meinhof and 39 fellow inmates began a hunger strike; but it was later revealed that their lawyers smuggled food in their briefcases for the strikers. Holger Meins refused the nourishment and, despite intravenous feeding, died on 9 November. The very next day, terrorists set out to avenge his death by murdering West Berlin’s chief judge.

On 24 April 1975, six terrorists shot their way into the West German embassy in Stockholm and seized hostages, including the ambassador. They demanded freedom for members of the Baader-Meinhof Gang, but the government in Bonn refused. A subsequent shootout with Swedish police left two hostages (the military and economic attachés) dead. All the terrorists were captured, and one was mortally wounded in a suicide attempt.

On 9 May 1976, Ulrike Meinhof was found hanged in her maximum-security cell in Stuttgart. Although her death was clearly a suicide, terrorists staged street riots in Frankfurt, and on 1 June two bombs exploded at the Frankfurt headquarters of the U.S. Army’s Fifth Corps (the target of a previous bombing), injuring 15 Americans, including several wives of soldiers.

A second generation of RAF extremists continued the mission that Baader and Meinhof had begun—a mission that reportedly included a midnight commando raid by Baader-Meinhof members against an American nuclear stockpile in West Germany. After a fierce firefight with U.S. troops, the intruders retreated before they could steal any bombs.

The RAF, like many other contemporary terrorist groups, built a practically impenetrable cell structure. Each cell had only three or four members, and information was shared on a need-to-know basis, thus maximizing operational security. An officer of West Germany's anti-crime organization conceded that "our secret services can infiltrate almost any espionage ring soon or later. But infiltrating the Red Army Faction is simply out of the question."²⁵

The 20–30 hardcore members of the RAF lived underground and conducted the bulk of the most lethal terrorist attacks while authorizing the "illegal militants" to carry out bombings and various lower-level attacks. Finally, the several-hundred-strong "periphery" constituted the vital support base that provided funding, shelter and communications for the operatives. A still larger number of sympathizers helped to disseminate the RAF's propaganda and ideology.

By 1977, West Germany was reeling under the impact of relentless terrorist attacks against both military and industrial facilities and high-profile individuals. In many cases, the terrorists' target was both a symbol of the hated capitalist system and a source (through ransom payments) of funding for the terrorist organization. West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt called the terrorist onslaught "the most serious challenge in the twenty-six-years of our democracy."²⁶ Rarely before the era of suicide bombings did a nation endure such a steady drumbeat of terrorist attacks in peacetime. Two of the 1977 murders sent particularly strong shock waves through West German society. On 30 July, RAF commandos killed Hans-Jürgen Ponto, head of the Dresdner Bank (West Germany's second-largest bank). Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Christian Klar knocked on his front door with a bouquet of flowers and shot him dead when he turned around to look for a vase. On 5 September 5 the RAF kidnapped Hans Martin Schleyer, president of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations and one of West Germany's most powerful industrialists. He was a former Nazi to boot, doubling his value in the eyes of the RAF. Sieglinde Hofmann pushed a baby carriage in front of Schleyer's car

to make it stop. She and her cohorts then retrieved weapons from the carriage and began firing.

On 17 October 1977, West German commandos stormed a Lufthansa jet that had been hijacked in Mogadishu, Somalia, by terrorists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. PFLP leader Wadi Haddad regarded the operation as a service to the RAF aimed at exerting pressure on the West German government to release Schleyer's kidnappers. The rescue team saved all 86 hostages aboard the plane and killed three of the four hijackers. On 19 October the RAF operatives, who had intended to use Schleyer as a bargaining chip to secure the release of their jailed comrades, executed him. The following day, three of the RAF inmates, Baader, Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe, were found dead in their cells. The German authorities attributed their deaths either to a "suicide pact" or to murder. "Bommi" Bauman later denounced the hijacking: "You can't take your life and place it above that of children and Majorca holiday-makers That is madness, bordering on Fascism."²⁷

A potential crisis in German-American relations was narrowly averted on 25 June 1979 when an RAF-fabricated remote-controlled bomb that was buried in the earthen floor of a bridge exploded just seconds after the chauffeur-driven car carrying NATO commander Gen. Alexander Haig passed over the site in the French countryside en route to NATO headquarters in Belgium. At her trial in 1991, Susanne Albrecht, who was married in the Soviet Union and had been living as a housewife in East Germany under an assumed name at the time of her capture, stated that she and her RAF cohorts had devised the plot against Haig while attending a terrorist training camp run by the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Soviet-aligned People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) and had finalized the plan while living in a suburb of Brussels near NATO headquarters. She also reportedly helped to smuggle the plastic explosives used in the attack into France.²⁸ Haig later contended that the plot on his life was hatched by the Soviet KGB and "subcontracted" to the East German Ministry for State Security (MfS), better known as the *Stasi*, which subsequently assigned the task to the RAF.²⁹

Less is known about the RAF's experimentation with weapons of mass destruction. In 1980, for example, police in Paris raided a Red Army Faction safehouse and discovered, along with forged documents and bomb-making instructions, a stash of publications

on bioweapons. “In the margin [of one publication] were the notes of a suspect who worked by day as a medical assistant, by night as a terrorist. And in the bathroom was a home-made lab, the tub loaded with flasks full of *Clostridium botulinum* ...”³⁰

Women played prominent roles in both the Baader-Meinhof Gang and the RAF. The proportion of female terrorists in West Germany was significantly larger than in terrorist groups elsewhere in Europe—perhaps because the radical feminist movement in Germany was stronger. Susanne Albrecht, the daughter of a prosperous Hamburg attorney, participated in the attack against Ponto (a close family friend who was also her godfather), as well as against Gen. Haig. Silke Maier-Witt and Monika Helbing along with Sieglinde Hofmann took part in the abduction of Schleyer. Other members of this terrorist sisterhood, in addition to Meinhof, included Gudrun Ensslin, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, and Inge Viett.

Many RAF members received training from East German instructors at camps on the island of Socotra in the PDRY. But by far the most intensive training took place in Communist East Germany itself.

Viett was instrumental in making arrangements for some RAF operatives to receive training from the *Stasi*. She reported after her capture that the RAF-*Stasi* partnership began in earnest in 1978. Viett recounted that she was fleeing from West German police when East German border guards detained her as she tried to cross the frontier with a gun in her possession. Harry Dahl, a *Stasi* colonel who headed Department XXII (the *Stasi*'s liaison with terrorist organizations), befriended her. His supervisor, Gen. Gerhard Neiber, permitted her to enter the country. The brown-eyed, brunette Viett's plain-Jane appearance belied her ruthlessness; but her autobiography, translated from the German as *Never Was I More Fearless*, revealed her obsession with violence.

Viett arranged for two other RAF members to join her as Col. Dahl's guests in the *Stasi*-owned “Forester's House on the Water.”³¹ A pier on the premises of this lakeside complex included a top-secret site that remained off-limits even to the East German military.³² The “Forester's House,” along with surrounding residences, served as an MfS vacation spot within easy commuting distance of *Stasi* headquarters. According to one report, “the terrorists could play soccer, fence, and exercise. A bar was stocked with Johnnie Walker and other expensive American and European liquors.”³³

Further afield were several East German military training facilities to which members of terrorist organizations gained access at the *Stasi's* behest. A report in the 4 July 1999 edition of the West German newspaper *Die Welt* described the condition of one such site:

In Wartin, where these [terrorist] fighters were presumably trained, the pines ... are reclaiming the moon-landscape left in the sand by the explosives exercises. To this day, targets in human shape and wrecked western cars hint at the activities practiced there.

Peter Mackowiak, a *Stasi* officer who served as a guard at a secret terrorist training camp, discovered chemical formulae on a blackboard in one of the camp's classrooms. After the demise of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Mackowiak recounted that the "students" parked their cars, which had West German license plates, in a garage on the outskirts of East Berlin that belonged to the MfS. A bus then transported them to the camp, where they traded their civilian clothes for green camouflage uniforms without shoulder straps or insignia so that they resembled East German military trainees. Mackowiak described in particular a walled-in area about half the size of a football field with mounds of earth on three sides and a bunker near the entrance. There the terrorists practiced using explosives, some of which were electronically ignited.³⁴

In March 1981 the *Stasi* agreed to give the RAF a six-week weapons-training course.

According to an article in *Stern*:

The RAF used live ammunition to practice with nine-millimeter SIG-Sauer guns, 357-magnum guns from Smith and Wesson, the West German Heckler and Koch submachine gun, the G-3 NATO gun [the standard gun of the West German *Bundeswehr*], and Kalashnikovs. The climax was a test shooting with the Russian RPG-7 anti-tank weapon [*Panzerfaust*]...³⁵

Experts attached great value to the latter weapon because of its penetration capability and precision.

The instructors tried to make the training as realistic as possible by simulating an actual terrorist operation. The *Stasi* provided

an impounded Mercedes for the exercise. The trainers put four sawdust-filled puppets and a live German Shepherd into the car. “After the first shot,” a trainer recounted to investigators, “two more shots were fired at the vehicle, in order to test the effect of a hit on the gas tank.” The puppets and the dog were torn to pieces. This exercise reportedly offended the sensibilities even of hard-core terrorists like Inge Viett.³⁶

The terrorists were eager to play with their new toys. They regarded the *Stasi*-sponsored training program as a dress rehearsal for two RAF operations that occurred within months after completion of the course. On 31 August 1981 the RAF’s “Sigurd Debus Commando” bombed the barracks at the U.S. military airbase in Ramstein, West Germany. The attack, in which a car containing three bombs was blown up, apparently by remote control, seriously wounded 17 people and caused extensive damage. One of the perpetrators was Helmut Pohl, a graduate of the *Stasi*’s training course.

On 15 September the RAF’s “Gudrun Ensslin Commando” attempted to assassinate Gen. Frederick J. Kroesen, commander-in-chief of U.S. forces in Europe. Christian Klar, another alumnus of the *Stasi* training program, played the leading role. He fired two Soviet-made RPG-7 antitank grenades at Kroesen’s Mercedes limousine. Kroesen survived because the car was armor-plated. Although the attack failed, West German authorities were shocked at its level of sophistication.

Among the other skills imparted by *Stasi* instructors to their pupils were the use of laser beams and the manufacture of fuses and explosives. In 1986 the RAF employed a laser to detonate the bomb that killed Karl Heinz Beckurts, a prominent physicist in Munich and a senior executive at the West German electronics giant Siemens AG who oversaw a project related to the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).³⁷ A letter found near the crime scene attributed the blast to the “Kommando Mara Cagol.” Cagol was a founder of Italy’s Red Brigades, a terrorist organization with which the RAF maintained a close working relationship.

An article in the 1 April 1991 edition of *Der Spiegel* recounted that an explosives expert from the *Stasi* “demonstrated for ... RAF terrorists the possibilities of electromechanical and electronic detonation of bombs.”

On 29 November 1989 the RAF assassinated Alfred Herrhausen, head of Deutsche Bank (Germany's largest bank) and a key adviser to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, by using photoelectric beams as detonators to blow up his armor-plated Mercedes-Benz limousine. According to a police report, the bomb was concealed in the saddle bags of a bicycle propped against a road marker near Herrhausen's residence. The bomb was wired to an electrical device hidden in nearby bushes and was triggered by a laser that spanned the road. Members of the assassination squad disguised as a repair crew had laid the cable that was used to activate the trigger. In a typed statement left near the crime scene, the RAF claimed credit for the murder.³⁸

Significant RAF operations in the mid-1980s included an attack on the home of the U.S. Consul General in Frankfurt, the bombing of the U.S. airfield at Heidelberg, the assassination of West German businessman Ernst Zimmerman (who was involved in SDI research), the bombing of a NATO fuel pipeline, and an attack at a U.S. military fuel pumping station and destruction of two trucks with a bomb that ignited more than 1,000 gallons of fuel, and, most significantly, the detonation in August 1985 of a nearly 300-pound car bomb inside the U.S. Rhein-Main airbase in Frankfurt, killing two Americans and injuring 23. The terrorists gained access to the base after a woman killed a U.S. soldier at a nearby disco and stole his military ID card. On 10 October 1986, RAF terrorists assassinated Gerold von Braunmühl, deputy to foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, as he arrived home from work in a taxi.

The RAF sought to demonstrate its continued viability even after the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany. On 28 July 1990, for example, it blew up the car of State Secretary Hans Neusel, West Germany's top counterterrorism expert, slightly injuring him. On 13 February 1991, RAF members fired more than 200 shots from a sniper rifle at the U.S. Embassy in Bonn to protest against the Persian Gulf War. On 1 April of that year, a sniper killed Detlev Karsten Rohwedde by firing a rifle through a window in his Düsseldorf mansion. Rohwedde was the head of the *Treuhandanstalt*, the organization responsible for transforming the command economy of Communist East Germany into a free-market system.

Although the police discovered strands of hair belonging to Red Army Faction member Wolfgang Grams at the crime scene and a note