Extraparliamentary Opposition in Postwar Germany

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I

It is a main thesis of this article that a revival of radical criticism of *representative* democracy is exemplified in the activities of the Extraparliamentary Opposition (APO)[1] in postwar West Germany. Such a political attitude is not only as old as parliamentary representation itself, but it has also been part of the socialist movement since its inception. A delusion exists, however, fostered by the frequently noted decline of radical parties in certain parts of the world, particularly in the most highly industrialized areas, that representative or liberal democracy has been so strongly established in these countries that it is beyond challenge either in theory or in practice. It would in fact be wrong to deny that the renewed attack on this representative democracy is carried forward largely by new social groups and under social and political conditions which force a reshaping of the form in which theory is articulated and translated into strategy and action. It is also worthy of note that today's antiparliamentarism in Germany (and, I suspect, elsewhere) is, as far as the theoretical challenge and the visibility of action are concerned, almost exclusively found on the Left. By this I mean that it is directed at parliamentary or representative democracy, not at democracy itself—whatever one understands by the term. The traditional Right antiparliamentarism, on the other hand, was above all hostile to the principle of democracy and only secondarily to the representative institutions through which it was expressed. This is particularly true of the Federal Republic of Germany, where the NPD, whatever antidemocratic nostalgia or principles may inspire some of its functionaries and followers, is forced by the basic law (constitution)

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[1] The term APO is an abbreviation of *Ausserparlamentarische Opposition* (Extraparliamentary Opposition).

to emphasize its faithful adherence to the democratic foundation of the state.

It is well-known that the term democracy itself is only ambiguously related to the principle of parliamentary representation and that this ambiguity is reflected in a mixture of representative and plebiscitary elements in the modern democratic state. The simple rousseauist definition of democracy as the "sovereign people" governing themselves, the notion of the identity of the governors with the governed, lives everywhere in strained marriage with the classical Burkian principle of representation.[2] No democratic theory worthy of its name and fulfilling its theoretical legitimizing function can escape from the problem of translating the "popular will" into political decision. It must, in however limited a manner, posit the voter as "rational." This applies even to the much reduced "competitive elites model" of democracy[3] and to a theory of democracy—very popular in Germany after 1945—emphasizing the essential "expressive" and mobilizing functions of political parties.[4] Thus, democratic institutions have always been vulnerable to the charge of betraying the norms from which they derive justification. This has been all the more so since the system has moved toward an inegalitarian and precariously balanced structure of interest-group adjustment with its consequent opaqueness and unaccountability.[5] The ancient suspicion that representative institutions tend to interpose themselves between the "popular will" and its realization, and to become independent entities serving the interest of rule[6] and of the powerful rather than that of "the people," have acquired new virulence. It is a virulence of theoretical, normative criticism unaccompanied, however, by the broadly based discontent at the material performance of the system which, in the past, has given weight

[2] See Ernst Fraenkel, "Die repraesentative und die plebiszitaere Komponente im demokratischen Verfassungsstaat," in his *Deutschland und die westlichen Demokratien* (Stuttgart, 1964).

[3] Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York, 1942); Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago, 1966).

[4] Gerhard Leibholz, *Strukturprobleme der modernen Demokratie* (Karlsruhe, 1958).

[5] From the host of analyses suffice it to cite a few: Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism* (New York, 1969); Samuel H. Beer, *British Politics in the Collectivist Age* (New York, 1965); John K. Galbraith, *American Capitalism* (Boston, 1952) and *The New Industrial State* (London, 1967).

[6] Classical expressions of this are Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (1906; reprint ed., Glencoe, 1950), esp. Ch. 2; Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (1915; reprint ed., Glencoe, 1949).

to the attack.[7] The APO—unlike the radical Left of the past—questions primarily the legitimacy, not the effectiveness, of the representative system.[8]

A rehearsal in detail of the various positions which the traditional German Left has adopted toward parliament and parliamentary struggle as a means of achieving the socialist goal[9] would go beyond the scope of this article. With the exception of Edward Bernstein and his few avowed "Revisionist" followers, the rhetoric of "revolution" created ambiguity in the attitude of even the de facto totally integrated majority. This ambiguity lasted until the collapse of Weimar. Parliamentary democracy was viewed—again with the exception of the "Fabian" wing—not as an end in itself, a system to be valued and preserved for its own sake, but as the preferred arena of the struggle for the socialist goal.[10] This implicit or explicit instrumentalization of parliamentary democracy permitted a wide range of essentially tactical decisions, depending on the estimate one had of the utility of the instrument. Unlike France or Italy, the German Left, inspired by Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx, had not, however, developed a significant anarchist wing which rejected on principle the parliamentary struggle. Only in the course of the 1918 Revolution, influenced by the Russian example, did radical "soviet" concepts gain fairly widespread popularity in Germany.[11] Though they were politically reduced to insignificance by the victory of the "majority socialists" (and their reactionary allies) over revolutionary ex-

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[7] This is less true of the United States where the Vietnam war and the unresolved problems of Negro emancipation directly affect two large minorities—youth and the blacks—which represent a mass base without parallel in Germany.

[8] For the distinction see Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (New York, 1960), Ch. 3. This is strictly true only for part of the New Left and only if "effectiveness" is narrowly defined in economic and technological terms.

[9] For a good summary, see Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905-1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954).

[10] The Austrian case is even clearer and by no means irrelevant because of the close connection between Austrian and German socialists as well as the impact of Austro-Marxism. See Norbert Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus; Der Austro-Marxismus als Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna, 1968) and Kurt L. Shell, *The Transformation of Austrian Socialism* (New York, 1962), particularly pp. 130-37.

[11] Walter Tormin, *Zwischen Raetediktatur und Sozialdemokratie* (Duesseldorf, 1954). Thus the USPD, which obtained five million votes in 1920, had at its extraordinary party conference in March 1919 adopted a demand for the "incorporation of the Soviet ('Raete') system into the Constitution" (Dieter Schneider and Rudolf Kuda, *Arbeiterraete in der Novemberrevolution* (Frankfurt/Main, 1968), p. 29.

periments[12] on the one hand, and by the Bolshevik liquidation of the soviet structure on the other, the idea of socialism as "direct" democracy, anchored in local councils, libertarian and antibureaucratic, continued to stimulate German radical theory, particularly in the writings of Karl Korsch.[13] As long as socialists perceived "true democracy" as possible only on the basis of socialism, antiparliamentarism was endemic in the Left; this was a logical consequence both of the denigration of existing bourgeois parliamentary democracy and the pessimistic evaluation of the chance to realize socialism via the route of electoral victory. With the recognition that the institutions of representative parliamentarism tended to prevent rather than to enhance the chance of socialist revolution, even limited acceptance of parliamentarism must give way to its total rejection.

If we notice with surprise the seemingly sudden eruption of radical antiparliamentarism in Germany as elsewhere, it must be because we had come to assume that either socialists had given up the hope of achieving a radical transformation of society or that they had come to believe that parliamentary democracy was an adequate—perhaps the only feasible—vehicle for this transformation. There was much evidence that both these assumptions, in different blends, were and remain true for a large part of leftist mass organizations in the postwar period of economic prosperity, consumer-oriented politics, and expanding social security.[14] But to the extent that individuals and groups challenged or rejected one or both of these assumptions, a renewal of the phenomenon of explicit leftist antiparliamentarism was inevitable.

II

The emergence of the APO is an ironic comment on the intent of the "framers" to draw the correct lessons from the sorry experi-

[12] Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterraete in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918-1919* (Duesseldorf, 1962). Apart from Munich, the best known example, more or less short-lived "soviet republics" were established in Hamburg, Bremen, Braunschweig, Leipzig, Gotha, Gera, Cuxhaven, Mannheim (p. 326).

[13] Karl Korsch, in Erich Gerlach, ed. *Schriften zur Sozialisierung*, (Frankfurt/Main, 1969). See also essays by A. Pannekoek, G. Lukacs, E. Reuter, L. Rudas in *Parlamentarismusdebatte* (Berlin, 1968).

[14] For one of many testimonies to this, see Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European Party System," in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Wiener, eds. *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 177-200. For the specific German case, cf. Otto Kirchheimer, "Germany: The Vanishing Opposition," in Robert A. Dahl, ed. *Political Opposition in Western Democracies* (New Haven, 1966), pp. 237-59.

ences of the Weimar Constitution and to eliminate all elements of direct or plebiscitary democracy from the basic law.[15] The myth of "the masses" had been destroyed by their jubilant assent to Hitler; the Federal Republic was to be "a constitutional democracy without participation of the masses."[16] This distrust of the masses was, however, accompanied by a simultaneous indoctrination with democratic theory which put strong emphasis on its moralistic and participatory elements. Democracy was not to be seen as a mere set of more or less imperfect institutions and processes. It was the fruit of a "democratic character" which had overcome the traditional German vice of turning away from politics to accepting the need for participation, rationality, and responsibility. Reflection and conscious choice were required, rather than reliance on nonexisting habitual patterns of democratic ritual. The radical ("direct") democratic implications of this lesson—however partially and slowly it was absorbed—are evident.

The uneasiness prevalent among German intellectuals, predisposing them to radical (Left) criticism of the Federal Republic as it developed in the 1950s, is largely explainable against the background of "year zero," 1945, and the demands and expectations harbored before the period of restoration had set in. The situation was not unique, but the depth of catastrophe and the total moral debasement added strength to the revulsion against the old order; and this meant not only nazism but also those factors which were perceived as having contributed to its rise and continuation. The brief period before the Cold War and Erhard's neoliberal market economy drastically molded the pattern of German social and political life was characterized among the opinion leaders, not "the masses," by demands for a radical break with the evil past, for a new beginning which, however dimly outlined, had to be marked by absolute honesty in human relations, by total rejection of violence, and by a humanistic socialism which protected the sanctity of the individual.[17] Kurt Schumacher's postulate that, "German democracy could only be socialist, or it would not exist at all," was not limited to members of his party. Thus,

[15] Friedrich Karl Fromme, *Von der Weimarer Verfassung zum Bonner Grundgesetz* (Tuebingen, 1960).

[16] Peter H. Merkl, *Die Entstehung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1965), p. 94.

[17] Ernst Richert refers to the spiritual base as a mixture of "old-time Socialism, Christian religion and the spirit of the Existentialism of Sartre and Camus, reflecting the chaos of the past decade" (*Die radikale Linke von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* [Berlin, 1969], p. 9).

the "Koelner Leitsaetze," drafted by the CDU of Cologne in June
1945, made "avaricious materialism" responsible for Hitler's tri-
umph and took a position for "true Christian socialism."[18] That
this vision of democracy had little in common with the system
of polyarchical economic and political bargaining subsequently
developed and justified is evident. The vision of 1947 was rapidly
transformed into a utopia; hope turned first into uneasiness and
then into disgust among a minority consisting of intellectuals,
unreconstructed socialists, and Protestant moralists and paci-
fists.[19] Within the great mass of the population, including the
SPD working class, the outcry over the missed moral regenera-
tion met with no comprehension. The radical dissenter became
isolated.

To understand the process by which moral nausea and dif-
fuse—mostly pacifist—protest, characteristic of the Left in the
1950s, turned into a movement which believed itself in posses-
sion of a superior theory and felt justified in taking direct action
against the parliamentary system, it is important to remember the
break in radical, particularly Marxist, theorizing imposed by the
Nazi regime, and the necessarily slow process by which the old
and discredited Marxism of the pre-Hitler period could be re-
placed by the "new" Marxism of the "humanistic," philosophical
Marx. The permeation and popularization of a nonorthodox ver-
sion of Marxism, serving the intellectual and emotional needs of
the German postwar generation of students and intellectuals, had
to await the publication of primary and secondary sources, the
return of refugee scholars or the emigration of anti-Stalinist Com-
munists from the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR). Thus,
it was not until late in the fifties that members of the Socialist
Student Organization (SDS) began the task of theoretical analysis
inspired by the "young Marx" and the "Frankfurt school" of radi-
cal criticism directed at liberal parliamentary democracy.[20]

The slowness of this process was enhanced by the absence of
a powerful Communist Party which, as in France and Italy, could
serve as a catchall and butt of controversy for left intellectuals,

[18] Cited in Ossip K. Flechtheim, ed. *Dokumente zur parteipolitischen Ent-
wicklung in Deutschland seit 1945*, II (Berlin, 1963), p. 31.
[19] For a testimony to this process, see Martin Walser, ed. *Die Alternative—
oder brauchen wir eine neue Regierung?* (Reinbeck/Hamburg, 1961).
[20] At an SDS delegate conference in 1953 a majority had emphatically as-
serted that "every liberal democracy was worth defending," thus justifying
Germany's remilitarization. (Cited by Ekkehard Kloehn, "Der Weg in den
Widerstand—eine Chronic des SDS," *Die Zeit*, 23 February 1968, p. 9).

providing continuity for radical antisystem theorizing. More than anywhere else on the continent—and in this respect the Federal Republic resembled the United States—orthodox Marxism was totally discredited through its identification with Stalinism and the DDR dictatorship. An intellectually respectable and appealing radicalism had to find a different, untainted theoretical base. The existence of the DDR affected the Left in West Germany in only a negative manner except in a roundabout way. The latter resulted from forcing a number of anti-Stalinist socialists such as Wolfgang Abendroth, Alfred Kantorowicz, Ernst Bloch, and Rudi Dutschke into exile in the Federal Republic where they contributed to the development of radical left theory and from confronting West Germany with the failure of its reunification policy as well as with the taboos and hypocrisy which became integral parts of West German political discourse through attempts to obscure this failure from the populace.

III

The growth of the APO may thus be viewed as a process marked by the reception of socialist antiliberal theory (against a background of disappointed idealism and moral absolutism); by adjustment and concretization of this theory in analyses of the Federal Republic within the context of Western postwar industrial capitalism; and by its articulation in a political practice aimed at the radical transformation ("revolution") now deemed necessary. This process interacted closely with historical events and changes inside and outside Germany which entered as concrete material the theoretical conceptions and considerations shaping the ideological posture of the APO-Left. These included the waxing and waning of the Cold War, the incorporation of the Federal Republic into the Western alliance structure, German rearmament, the Vietnam war, the SPD's decision to accept the basic elements of Adenauer's foreign and domestic policies, and, finally, the "Grand Coalition" and the passage of the Emergency Laws (*Notstandsgesetze*) with SPD approval. It appears that these were required to create the "density" in the "critical mass" prepared by permeation of "critical theory" among the receptive groups to foster a permanent disposition toward anomic, extralegal action and by certain triggers (Passage of Emergency Laws, assassination attempt on Rudi Dutschke, increases in streetcar fares) to set off large-scale actions outside institutional channels, aimed at

achieving goals which could not be reached by parliamentary means.[21]

The intellectual, theoretical tools lay at hand, waiting to be rediscovered or to be communicated by critical academic analysts. Three university centers where radical Marxist theory was made the subject of intense scholarly concern—Berlin, Marburg, and Frankfurt—can be seen as foci of the developing attack. Though it would be a vulgar simplification to identify the theoretical work of such academics as Ossip Flechtheim, Hans-Joachim Lieber, and Peter Ludz in Berlin, Wolfgang Abendroth in Marburg, or Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Juergen Habermas, and Iring Fetscher in Frankfurt (to name but the most prominent) directly with the strategies and actions of the APO,[22] their more or less engaged and radical theorizing undoubtedly shaped the basic patterns of political thought of several generations of students in the social sciences.[23] The brightest of those became academic assistants— and thus transmission belts to wider groups of students—or leaders in student organizations and student self-government, who in turn played a decisive part in the period of mobilization for action. The focal influence appears particularly significant in the first or preparatory phase, before the first generation of graduates had moved on, either to other universities as assistants or teachers, or into positions in the mass media, adult education, book publishing, or the arts. Because of the relative smallness of the German intellectual establishment and the ease and frequency of communication, a rather rapid process of permeation from a few centers is feasible and noticeable.

The scholarly involvement with the history and theory of the German labor movement led, apart from the preoccupation with the philosophical works of Marx, to an intensive study of the radical epigones, particularly Rosa Luxemburg, George Lukacs,

[21] I do not claim to offer here a satisfactory explanation of the complex and multiform phenomenon of the widespread "student revolt." But it seems important to me to distinguish several variables: mood, theoretical legitimization, policy issues, and specific triggers. To these must be added the "critical mass," i.e., a student body large enough and receptive enough to spawn a significant minority of activists.

[22] Each of the academics named has recently been engaged in more or less severe controversies with the student activists; several have been the object of vigorous criticism and even physical (though mostly nonviolent) attack.

[23] Thus Juergen Habermas affirms that, "it would be (equally) silly to deny a connection between critical theory and the views particularly of the older SDS members formed by their studies in Berlin or Frankfurt." (*Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform* [Frankfurt/Main, 1969], p. 40).

and Karl Korsch.[24] The SPD had failed in 1918 and it had failed again in 1933, apparently because it had relied too strongly on automatic "historical forces" and on legal parliamentary means. On the other hand, the dangers of elitist "dictatorship over the proletariat" and of Stalinist bureaucratization were also perceived and feared. The thought and example of "Rosa," as Rudi Dutschke fondly and familiarly referred to her, was, therefore, particularly significant. She rejected the "revisionist" notion that the parliamentary-bourgeois state evolved more or less automatically and peacefully into a socialist one. She had recognized—and this proved now more than ever the crucial problem—that the capitalist state in its parliamentary form exerted its repression not openly through legislation but as an industrial system based on private ownership.[25] She had seemingly anticipated the rise of fascism from the womb of bourgeois parliamentarism, a mainstay of subsequent and present-day Marxist analysis, and thus warned against undue reliance on parliamentary democracy as a safeguard and vehicle of progress.[26]

Above all, according to Rosa Luxemburg, if the great mass of the people were to develop "revolutionary consciousness," neither parliamentary elections and processes, oriented to existing needs and necessary compromises between them, nor centrally enforced discipline could serve.

Direct, spontaneous action in and against the places of production was the foremost exercise of the proletariat in its process of self-emancipation.[27] A bourgeois parliament *might* be useful as an instrument for agitation and confrontation, but it could never serve as an instrument for really fundamental transformations. The bargaining process and piecemeal legislation meant "vegetating politically within the established framework" and tended to integrate rather than revolutionize the masses. Similarly, George Lukacs concentrated on the problem of proletarian consciousness and the means of arousing it from a cocoon woven by the bourgeois-parliamentary past. Here, too, though with a much greater, and not necessarily unwelcome, emphasis on the avant-garde function of a Communist Party, criticism was directed at any mechanical interpretation of the relationship between economic base and

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[24] Cf., e.g., Iring Fetscher, *Karl Marx und der Marxismus* (Munich, 1967).
[25] Rosa Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution" in *Politische Schriften I*, ed. by Ossip K. Flechtheim (Frankfurt/Main, 1966).
[26] Ibid., 76-81.
[27] "Massenstreik, Partei und Gewerkschaft," ibid., particularly 173-98.

the development of revolutionary consciousness. The economic process provided opportunities, but it was in the process of revolutionary action that the proletariat freed itself from para-lyzing bourgeois influence, constituted itself as a class in the Marxist sense, and overcame the threat of bureaucratic pater-nalism.[28]

Not unrelated to Lukacs' Hegelian approach to Marx is the "critical theory" developed by the Frankfurt "Institut fuer Sozial-forschung" in the late twenties, continued in exile in France and America, and reestablished in Frankfurt after World War II. An unbroken line stretches from Herbert Marcuse's early essays, di-alectically identifying barbaric fascism with pluralist, competi-tive, bourgeois capitalist liberalism[29] and upholding the humanistic task of philosophy as the basis of a critical theory which "con-fronts resignation and betrayal with the endangered and sacrificed potentialities of man,"[30] via *"Kritik der instrumentalen Vernunft,"*[31] and *Dialektik der Aufklaerung,*[32] (the latter completed in 1944 by Horkheimer and Adorno), to Juergen Habermas' fundamental cri-tique of German postwar liberal democracy,[33] and, finally, to Mar-cuse's *One Dimensional Man*[34] and the essay on "repressive tolerance."[35]

In his introduction to the collection of essays written between 1934 and 1938, Marcuse does not distort historical truth when he says: "If there was one insight about which the author and his friends in the Institute were *not* uncertain it was . . . that totalitar-ian force and totalitarian reason came from the structure of exist-ing society about to overcome (*bewaeltigen*) its liberal past and to incorporate its historic negation. Thus, the task for critical theory was to identify the tendencies which connected the liberal past with its totalitarian transformation (*Aufhebung*)."[36] The two cen-

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[28] Cf. Georg Lukacs "Methodisches zur Organisationsfrage" (1922) in *Die Organisation im Klassenkampf* (Frankfurt/Main, 1967); also Iring Fetscher, *Karl Marx*, pp. 76ff.

[29] Herbert Marcuse, "Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in der totalitaeren Staatsauffassung" (1934) in *Kultur und Gesellschaft I* (Frankfurt/Main, 1965).

[30] "Philosophie und kritische Theorie" (1937), ibid., 102-27 (quotation, 113).

[31] Original title: *Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1947).

[32] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklaerung* (Amsterdam, 1955).

[33] It is best known and has had its greatest impact through the introduction to *Student und Politik* (Neuwied, 1961).

[34] Beacon Press (Boston, 1964).

[35] Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, *A Cri-tique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston, 1965).

[36] Marcuse, *Kultur und Gesellschaft I*, p. 7.

tral concerns of *Dialektik der Aufklaerung* are also the basis of the subsequent attack on the liberal university and representative democracy, i.e., the attack on "value-free" science, quantification, and positivism on the one hand, connected to the functional requirements of industrial capitalism; and the corrosive analysis of the liberal concept of the "free individual" in the context of a "culture industry" which inhibits rather than enhances his emancipation and rationality on the other hand. American mass culture serves as the negative ideal: a social and political system which has succeeded in manipulating the exploited and repressed classes in such a manner that "they insist unwaveringly on the ideology through which they are enslaved."[37] That it was Herbert Marcuse who received the standing ovation of the Berlin students in the summer of 1967 and not Theodor Adorno, who had ironically been presented with a teddy bear a short while before, was an affirmation rather than a denial of the influence which the Frankfurt Institute had had. The "reception" of Marcuse had been long prepared; and Marcuse's contribution to the thinking of the APO lay less in the originality of his philosophical thought than in its attempt to break through the isolating shield of pure theory and relate the critique of liberal democracy—"totalitarian mass democracy" in his terminology[38]—to contemporary revolutionary struggles and the oppressed victims' "right of resistance."[39] Above all, he provided justification for the rejection of the game of parliamentary politics based on respect for the marketplace of ideas and rules of liberal discussion.[40]

Unable to provide specific tactical instructions, and thereby disappointing his expectant listeners, Marcuse nevertheless underpinned and affirmed their liberation from the constrictive obedience to institutionalized procedures and majority decisions based on reverence for a necessarily manipulated populace. "Radical emancipation" cannot be achieved within the soft, rubbery walls of the established liberal "totalitarian" system; the choice of tactics and methods lies with the conscience of the revolting individual and of the "historically progressive" minority.[41]

Though the theoretically and practically doubtful and dangerous consequences of this thesis were pointed out and criticized by

[37] Ibid., 159 (translation by Kurt L. Shell).
[38] Ibid., 13.
[39] Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," 116.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Herbert Marcuse, *Versuch ueber die Befreiung* (Frankfurt/Main, 1969), particularly pp. 105-16.

other members of the "Frankfurt School,"[42] they appeared highly
plausible extrapolations of the fundamental criticism of the central
concept around which liberal, parliamentary democracy revolves:
the postulate of the "autonomous, adult individual" (*"der muen-
dige Mensch"*) not as a mere potential and ideal for a future demo-
cratic society, but as the empirical author of political decisions
and referent of their utility.[43] With the denial—by now a common-
place among the APO—of public opinion in modern Western de-
mocracy as a functioning mechanism either of rational formulation
of decisions or of their control,[44] the legitimatizing base of the lib-
eral system and the "rules of the game" implied by it are open to
attack by all those unwilling to abide by its decisions. The citizen,
reduced to the passive role of voter, can neither be rational nor in-
dependent in exercising a function which is "factually without
consequences" because it is no longer in parliament and in public
that, in this view, decisions of real weight are reached.[45]

IV

By the end of the fifties the theoretical construct, composed of the
various strands already mentioned and reinforced by critical
American publications such as C. W. Mills' *Power Elite*, David
Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and John Galbraith's *The Affluent
Society*, had been completed. But the construct had not yet been
widely "received," and had not yet effectively seized hold of the
intellectual or even the academic Left.

The year 1960 may be viewed as a watershed in the growth of
the APO. In the previous decade the individuals, groups, and orga-
nizations opposed to the process of "restoration" were not entirely
without a political home, for the SPD was a harbor for all, however
radical in their criticisms, as long as they did not give aid and com-
fort to "the enemy"—the Socialist Unity Party (SED). Obviously

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[42] E.g., Juergen Habermas, ed. in his introduction to *Antworten auf Herbert
Marcuse* (Frankfurt/Main, 1968). He warns: "Force can be legitimately *willed*
and can be emancipatory in its nature only to the extent that it is the inescap-
able result of a situation in which repressive force is experienced as unbear-
able by the *general* consciousness" (p. 16).

[43] "Governments must be made for human beings as they are, or as they are
capable of speedily becoming" (John S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative
Government*, Worlds Classics ed. [Oxford, 1912], p. 243).

[44] Cf. Juergen Habermas *Strukturwandel der Oeffeintlichkeit* (Neuwied,
1962), also "Oeffeintlichkeit" in Ernst Fraenkel and Karl Dietrich Bracher, eds.
Staat und Politik, new ed. (Frankfurt/Main, 1964).

[45] Habermas, *Student und Politik*, p. 47.

the SPD's policy was not "Left" enough or Marxist enough for many. In particular, the decision to cooperate in parliamentary committees concerned with the newly-established German army had led to protests and even to demonstrative departures of prominent members.[46] The fear of being identified in the popular mind with Communism, however, acted as a brake on experiments and increasingly hampered the party's political flexibility.

Following the electoral defeat of 1957, when the SPD had vigorously opposed Adenauer's foreign policy and German control over atomic weapons, the SPD leadership adopted a determined course to achieve "respectability" among the broad depoliticized voting masses with their wariness of "experiments." Two closely-related actions gave strong impetus to the development of the APO: the abandonment of the organization, "Fight Against Atom Death," founded with the help of the SPD, which had attracted a wide spectrum of support;[47] and the severance of SPD relations with the SDS and subsequently with the organization of professors formed to aid the SDS financially. Relationships between the SPD and SDS had been increasingly strained since an SDS-sponsored conference against atomic rearmament in January 1959 had passed "neutralist" resolutions approximating the DDR position.[48] While the dominant group in the SDS was critical of the DDR, a minority centered around the Hamburg monthly *konkret* was indeed close to the SED position and thereby able to embarrass the SPD. More fundamental, it seems, was the fact that the SDS' dominant center inevitably functioned as the SPD's "bad conscience," appearing to relativize a position which the party's leadership no longer wanted to have called in doubt. This was the commitment, maintained since the adoption of the Godesberg program in 1959 and Herbert Wehner's speech accepting the central points of Adenauer's foreign policy, to Germany's integration into the Western alliance system and to the concept of a market economy with a minimum of planning. An SPD which had ceased to act as an opposition to Adenauer's restorative regime, which had abandoned socialism and expelled those who were not willing to join in this "betrayal," could no longer hope to serve as a home for anyone thinking of himself as

[46] Thus, the editor-in-chief and assistant editor of the central SPD weekly *Vorwaerts* left the party and founded a left-socialist paper *(Andere Zeitung)* whose contributors included Viktor Agartz, previously expelled from the SPD, as well as Abendroth and functionaries of the trade unions and the socialist youth organisations. (Richert, pp. 71-72).

[47] Ibid., 80-82.

[48] See Ekkehard Kloehn, "Der Weg in den Widerstand."

"Left." This did not mean, however, that an alternative pattern of political practice which would have offered a plausible road toward achieving desired results either within the parliamentary system or, as became increasingly clear, outside of it, offered itself. But the avowed change in the SPD's line and the leadership's determination to render it credible to the public at large prepared the ground for the wider "reception" of antiparliamentary theory previously developed.

The SDS and "neighboring" leftist student groups now turned inward and intensively examined the writings of the radical "classics" as well as the contemporary critical literature. Freed from the need to consider the political or organizational requirements of the SPD, by 1964 the SDS had reached the conclusion that there was no hope that the existing political parties would bring about significant changes or even defend the allegedly weakened constitutional system of the Federal Republic against the process of "fascization." But there was still expectation that pressure from outside, i.e., extraparliamentary action, might influence the SPD (as it had done in the "Spiegel Affair") or that the trade unions might offer a mass base for the defense of democracy and the advancement of working-class interests, "because the trade unions could deny the interests of workers less than a party which is anchored in a populace of communal employees."[49]

The rhetoric of the SDS leadership was now permeated by the critical analysis provided by Abendroth and Habermas. To the SDS, parliament had lost its power to the government and bureaucracy; oligarchic parties held a monopoly position; the only "alternative still possible was between our authoritarian, ultimately neofascist system and one which developed into a social(ist) democracy."[50] The absence of inflammatory rhetoric and the modesty of practical proposals accompanying the radically critical analysis are noticeable at this point. In the area of the university, too, the SDS was still satisfied to have presented the "Establishment" with a set of proposals for fundamental reform,[51] but the physical confrontation with the university authorities and the consequent escalation of rhetoric and action had not yet begun. It was still essentially critical "theory," not yet "revolutionary practice,"

[49] Manfred Liebel at the 19th Delegate Conference of the SDS, reported in *Neue Kritik* 25/26 (October 1964), 10.

[50] Helmut Schauer, chairman of the SDS, quoting Habermas, ibid., 12.

[51] Wolfgang Nitsch et al., *Hochschule in der Demokratie* (Neuwied, 1965).

with which the Left students were concerned.[52] Acceptance of the Marcusian assumption that the jump into the realm of freedom was possible *today* through the level of productive forces did not yet lead to the conclusion that this jump should be attempted or brought about by "direct action."[53]

The "shifting of gears" became visible in 1965-66, though it was still limited to Berlin and the Free University.[54] The individual events themselves were obviously accidental and frequently trivial. The rapid escalation cannot be explained without reference to the Vietnam war, which gave strong impetus to the radicalization of the Left student leadership and subsequently increased the mass of students receptive to the SDS arguments and direct action tactics.[55]

The political and economic developments of the Federal Republic in the years 1965-66 appeared to confirm the critical analysis provided by left theorists and bolstered their position of intellectual dominance within the student population. Chancellor Erhard had expounded the concept of the "formierte Gesellschaft"[56] in which he asserted the need for governmental coordination of a pluralistic society which could not, by itself, be relied on to remain in balance and to advance the "common good." This concept, based on certain notions drawn from the teachings of Catholic social theory, lent itself to easy interpretation as corporatist, and thus "fascist," ideology and a refutation of the liberal principles Erhard had previously upheld. "Formation" of society from above was viewed as the authoritarian answer to the disruptive tendencies inherent in liberal capitalism.[57] The economic recession—the

[52] See Bernd Rabehl, "Von der antiautoritaeren Bewegung zur sozialistischen Opposition," in Uwe Bergmann et al., *Rebellion der Studenten oder: Die neue Opposition* (Reinbeck/Hamburg, 1968), p. 157.

[53] Helmut Schauer (Cf. N. 50).

[54] Cf. Richard L. Merritt, "The Student Protest Movement in West Berlin," *Comparative Politics*, I (July 1969), 516-33. The most comprehensive description and analysis, sympathetic to the students, is presented by Ludwig von Friedburg et al., *Freie Universitat und politisches Potential der Studenten* (Neuwied, 1968).

[55] Interview with SDS and SHB functionaries (Berlin, March 1967). Cf. also von Friedeburg, pp. 293ff.

[56] *Archiv der Gegenwart*, v. 35 (1965), 31 March 1965, 11776. For an elaboration of the concept see *Gesellschaftspolitische Kommentare* (Bonn, 1965).

[57] Gert Schaefer, "Leitlinien stabilitaetskonformen Verhaltens," in Gert Schaefer and Carl Nedelmann, eds. *Der CDU-Staat* (Munich, 1967); also Reinhard Opitz, "Der grosse Plan der CDU—die Formierte Gesellschaft," *Blaetter fuer deutsche und internationale Politik* (September 1965).

first major setback the West German economy had suffered since its upward move began in 1948—which led to the downfall of Erhard provided important additional corroborative evidence and was used by the Left extensively, not only to point out the fragility of capitalist prosperity but to stress its danger as a basis for future authoritarian-fascist rule.

When the SPD agreed at the end of 1966 to form the Grand Coalition and committed itself to the passage of the long-delayed "emergency powers" amendments, the critical picture rounded itself completely and the more abstract and esoteric analyses of Abendroth and Habermas could now be translated into concrete, easily demonstrable experiences of everyday political life. The SPD, so it was argued, had begun by betraying socialism; it had now "sold out" completely and was betraying parliamentary democracy itself. It was ready to cooperate in the authoritarian attempt to stabilize the status quo in the face of the falling profit rate —the latest phase in the decline of German parliamentarism.[58] The system of "concerted action," quickly introduced by SPD Minister of Economics Karl Schiller, was, in the absence of fundamental structural reform of private ownership, interpreted as an application of Erhard's corporatist concept under a different name. The obvious reduction of parliament's function profoundly violated the understanding of democracy, not only among Leftists but for a generation of students who had been brought up on the textbook model of democracy in which Parliament played the central role. Parliament, in their eyes, had become "a functionless appendix to the system of rule which was not eliminated merely in order to leave to the citizens the fictive belief that they still possessed an effective instrument of participation and control."[59] The oligarchic system, resistant as it was to the really vital and genuine demands of "the masses," used parliament as an instrument of integration and manipulation, preventing men from emancipating themselves and diverting their attention to secondary issues through the admittedly competitive distribution of material values.[60] It is at this point in the analysis of West German liberal democracy that the theory itself turns—or, more accurately, may turn—into an anti-

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[58] Walter Euchner, "Zur Lage des Parlamentarismus," *Der CDU-Staat*, pp. 63-79.

[59] Ibid., 78.

[60] The most radical formulation of this thesis and one which, significantly, gained widespread popularity among German students is that of Johannes Agnoli, *Die Transformation der Demokratie* (Berlin, 1967).

constitutional one, from a theory deploring the decline of parliamentarism into one rejecting it altogether. Whether it does—and it is around this point that the schism of the APO subsequently developed—depends, apart from individual, psychological factors, on one's estimate of the system's capacity for reform by nonviolent means; and even more on the assessment of the feasibility and consequences of revolution.

Viewed "functionally," contemporary pluralist democracy may even be interpreted as "fascist," if the essence of fascism is seen not as a cult of irrationality and violence but as a system placing emphasis on "community" while maintaining the class structure of capitalist society unchanged.[61] As long as material prosperity can be kept up, moreover, and the manipulative apparatus effectively prevents radical-democratic demands from becoming overt and widespread, "parliamentarism" is viewed as the functionally *adequate* form of fascism, efficient because it appears to be based on consent freely given and to be tolerant of dissent, even radical dissent, as long as it remains marginal and harmless.[62] This analysis explains the relative indifference of the APO, at least in theory, to the rise of the NPD and to the charge by liberals that its tactics would bring about fascism as a result of an inevitable "back-lash." Fascism in its crude, terroristic form is largely considered passé. The *"Notstandsstaat"*—the supposedly constitutional defense of the state against its subverters—does not require a radical Right which would only embarrass it. The openly repressive character of the system appears but rarely, in the moments when the emancipatory demands can no longer be contained by manipulation.[63]

V

For a brief period, roughly from the spring of 1967 to the spring of 1968, the various strands of disaffected Left dissent seemed to

[61] This goes a step beyond Marcuse's dialectical linkage of the two. Cf. Agnoli, pp. 40ff. On the assumption that all nonsocialist societies are antagonistic by nature, the presence of consensus is tantamount to fascism and can, by definition, only be the result of manipulation.

[62] Ibid., particularly 55-72. The parallel to Marcuse's concept of "repressive tolerance" is obvious.

[63] "In such periods the rulers mobilize police and the military, pass emergency laws, declare oppositional groups to be criminal, prohibit them and beat them up, terroristic sentences are passed against individuals and with the introduction of preventive custody (*Vorbeugehaft*) systematically prepare new concentration camps." (Peter van Spall, "Strukturmodelle der Neuen Linken—Kritik und Selbstkritik," *Links, Studien zu Zeitfragen*, 12 [1969], p. 2).

merge or at least to form a broad "united front" movement. This was still centered in the universities, but it encompassed also the pacifist-liberal "anti-atom" organization, the left wings of the SPD and the trade unions, and the small groups and parties formed by disgruntled or expelled SPD members and SED-oriented Communists. The spectrum ranged from the anarchic-hippie wing of the SDS—i.e., the members of "Commune I," expelled from the SDS because its activities embarrassed the organization but subsequently offered readmission—to the academic representatives of "critical theory" and radical democracy such as Adorno and Habermas and old-line Communists in the SED—West Berlin or the German Peace Union (DFU).[64] At no time was this front without grave internal controversy and tensions but there was, beyond general agreement on the critical analysis of Germany's sociopolitical structure, a willingness to establish and cooperate in joint organizations such as the Republican Clubs and genuine joint mass action, of which the May Day Parade of 1968 in West Berlin, with about 30,000 participants, was a symbolic high point. At the universities themselves, outside them particularly in the youth sections of the SPD and the trade unions, and even in such previously nonsocialist and nonradical organizations as the Catholic Boy Scouts or the Humanistische Studenten Union (HSU), the ideology of the APO had taken hold.[65] Distinctions between the SDS and other Left organizations, particularly the Social Democratic German Student Federation (SHB) (which was originally founded by the SPD as an answer to the SDS) and the LSD (the student organization of the FDP), had largely disappeared in the universities. Members saw themselves belonging to the APO.[66] But the critical situation linked at least four distinct groups of Left dissenters which (typologically simplified) may be categorized as follows:

1. Radical socialist democrats who wished to preserve and defend the achievements of the "Rechtsstaat" and who saw no alternative to working for reform in and through the SPD. APO clearly meant to them *extraparliamentary action*, a means to arouse and pressure the parties, parliament, and government. Though highly critical of German foreign pol-

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[64] For a brief conspectus of the organizational and ideological spectrum of the APO at this time, see Rolf Seeliger, *Die ausserparlamentarische Opposition* (Munich, 1968) and Otto Wilfert, *Laestige Linke* (Mainz, 1968).

[65] See *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 23 October 1968, pp. 6-11.

[66] Ibid. As its national chairman, the Liberal (!) Student Federation elected a self-avowed Marxist.

icy toward the East (and generally favoring the recognition of the DDR), they opposed cooperation with the SED or any groups tainted with Stalinism.[67]

2. Socialists, hostile to or despairing of the SPD, moderately critical or friendly toward the SED and the DDR, eager to form broad alliances for purposes of extraparliamentary or electoral action. The constitutional framework remained imperative, either out of conviction or because of fear of legal prosecution.[68]

3. Revolutionary Marxists, Trotzkyites, and Maoists hostile to the "bureaucratic" socialist regimes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but affirming the need for organizational centralization and discipline. A socialist party was seen as useful only if it were determinedly revolutionary, "the way the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) was till the middle of the twenties."[69] They rejected all forms of "hippie" politics and "political happenings" lacking the necessary revolutionary seriousness.

4. The "Anti-Authoritarian" Marxist-anarchist Left, anti-parliamentary on ideological grounds, emphasizing direct action, cultivating spontaneity and libidinal liberation, aiming at a mass base not through formal organization but through joint commitment to action and revolutionary work "at the base." It was hostile to established Communist parties and to all organizational tendencies with bureaucratic implications.[70]

The temporary unity of these disparate groupings was created by events in which the violence of police action brought about solidarity of resistance, where crucial elements of the democratic or-

[67] This position is exemplified by a number of "Left" academics and intellectuals, as well as by parts of the SHB and the JuSo (Young Socialists). For a characteristic statement, see *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 18 May 1968, p. 11.

[68] See a statement by the Christian Peace Service (*Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 23 October 1968, p. 11). Among academics, Professor Abendroth and the late Professor Werner Hofmann (both of Marburg University) are the most prominent representatives of this group. Certain SDS organizations—particularly that in Cologne—were dominated by its spokesmen.

[69] Peter Brandt, son of SPD-chairman, then foreign minister, Willy Brandt and editor of *Neuer Roter Turm* (*Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 26 October 1968, p. 10 and 23 October 1968, 8). As theoretical ancestors of his group Brandt cites "Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotzki." For attempts at clarification of respective positions, see *Rote Presse Korrespondenz* (19 December 1969).

[70] Foremost representative of this position has been the group dominant in the SDS since 1967.

der were seemingly acutely endangered, or where, as in the case
of universities, autocratic subsystems were confronted with the
demand for "democratization" or for the realization of long-de-
layed reforms. Partly by accident—the passage of the "emergency
laws" or the assassination attempt on Rudi Dutschke are examples,
partly through interaction and feedback between these factors, a
process of fusion developed which reached its climax in May 1968.
It was strengthened by the temporary expansion and apparent tri-
umph of the French student revolt which seemed to belie the theo-
retical pessimism shared by all groups. For a brief moment the
spread of revolutionary euphoria led a number of APO spokesmen,
particularly in the SDS, to believe that an "historically open situa-
tion" had arrived in which the "mobilization of the exploited
masses" was becoming feasible.[71]

In June 1967 the student revolt, so far confined to Berlin, first
spread to West Germany. At the Congress of Hanover, spontane-
ously called together after the death of Benno Ohnesorge at the
hand of a Berlin policeman, the discussion of the "terror" exer-
cised by the "Establishment" brought together representatives of
the academic Left in joint protest and demand for radical social
reform.[72] Approximately 5,000 students and professors from all
parts of West Germany travelled to Hanover and heard the intel-
lectual leaders of the SDS openly call for "illegal actions" in reply
to the "de facto illegal prohibitions and orders of the Berlin execu-
tive"[73] and for "permanent revolt in the universities . . . to the
point of destruction of the bourgeois process of academic sci-
ence."[74] Rudi Dutschke enunciated what was to become the guid-
ing strategic line for the SDS in the next phase of the struggle:
"that the established rules of the game of this irrational democracy
are not our rules of the game, that the starting point for the politici-
zation of the students must be the conscious breaking of these
established rules by us."[75] Simultaneously a central target of at-
tack outside the universities was defined: the publishing house of
Axel Springer, which was held factually and symbolically respon-

[71] Frank Deppe and Kurt Steinhaus of the SDS had expressed the expecta-
tion in 1966 that economic and political crises of an increasingly grave char-
acter would soon create such "open situations." ("Politische Praxis—Schulung
im SDS," *Neue Kritik*, 38/39 [October 1966], 33).

[72] Cf. the protocol of the deliberations in Bernward Vesper, ed., *Bedingun-
gen und Organisation des Widerstandes; Der Kongress in Hannover* (Berlin,
1967), Flugschrift No. 12.

[73] Wolfgang Lefevre, ibid., 54.

[74] Hans-Jürgen Krahl (Frankfurt), ibid., 71-72.

[75] Ibid., 79-80.

sible for the irrationalist and antiemancipatory state of public opinion in West Germany.[76]

The tragic and dramatic nature of the revolt and the tactic of provocation—the violation of established rules inside and outside the university—engaged in by the SDS and sympathetic student groups led to wide publicity and had a powerful impact, particularly on a "group of journalists, artists, men of letters, publishers and editors," who, in turn, gave the protest movement "publicistic reinforcement."[77] The "antiauthoritarian" spokesmen of the SDS set the tone for the political atmosphere of winter-spring 1967-68 through the escalating and hectic series of provocatory go-ins, teach-ins, mass meetings, and demonstrations. A coherent tactical line was not discernible;[78] at least three parallel approaches were put forward. These included the attempt to mobilize and "educate" a large mass of sympathizers—middle-class left liberals in particular—and to appeal to "the public" through discussions and hearings on such topics as the power of the "Springer Empire." Provocative actions, particularly at the universities, attempts to draw attention by the use of such "pseudoviolence" as throwing eggs and tomatoes, ridiculing public figures, breaking up or "turning around" (*umfunktionieren*) public meetings in pursuance of the thesis that the "provocatory irrationality (of throwing eggs and tomatoes) apparently did more for political enlightenment than most political round table discussions."[79]

The struggle at the universities emphasized the demand for "student power," expressed in fixed parities of representation on all university bodies.[80] At the same time, the first "Critical University" was established in Berlin, attempting to supplement and counter the official catalog of offerings.[81] Consideration for less radical allies, the intent to mobilize large masses of students and

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[76] Ibid., 99.

[77] Habermas, *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform*, pp. 39-40.

[78] Retrospectively this phase was critically described by one of the leading SDS spokesmen as one where "the hectic nature of various actions did not permit the SDS to catch its breath," when "political actions had turned into adventures" (Bernd Rabehl, "Der SDS und die Strategie der directen Aktion in Westeuropa," *Neue Kritik* 50 (October 1968), 49.

[79] Wolfgang Lefèvre, "Ursachen und Konsequenzen des 2. Juni," *Neue Kritik*, 42/43 (August 1967), 9.

[80] In this period the cry was usually for "one third parity"—i.e., one third professors, one third assistants, one third students (Cf., e.g., Friedrich Karl Fromme, "Das heiss begehrte Drittel," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30 November 1967, p. 1).

[81] See the FU-AstA statement on the founding of the Critical University (excerpts in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 2 November 1967).

other sympathizers concerned with reform rather than revolution, apparently prevented the most activist wing of the movement from attempting a confrontation with authorities—particularly in the universities—up to the point of destruction of hitherto existing structures and procedures. The SDS plan to culminate the educational campaign against the Springer Concern with a "massive siege" of the publishing houses did[82] not materialize; or, rather, the brief effort to implement it at Easter 1968 was the result not of a worked-out plan but of the semispontaneous reaction to the attempt to assassinate Rudi Dutschke. The fact that this event coincided with the traditional but already radicalized Easter March led to the first major set of clashes between demonstrating students and police outside Berlin and to the first use of violence "against things" as opposed to mere provocation.

In the wake of the series of bloody confrontations in many German cities, exploited rather than planned by the extremist wing of the APO, the internal discussion about the role of violence, and thus the future strategy of the APO, began in earnest.[83] In the concrete situation in which theory had to be translated into action, the relation between means and goals could not be glossed over any longer. Where the use of violence had resulted in the unintended death of two persons, when the first political assassination had penetrated the civility of postwar German politics, it was no longer a matter of violating "rules of the game" in order to stir up a lethargic public. A clear line had to be drawn, even among APO members who believed themselves justified in operating somewhat "outside of the borders of legality," between the use of violence as an instrument of education or as a means to attack power and authority head-on. Though outside events—particularly the passage by parliament of the "Emergency Laws"—postponed the manifestation of the incipient breakup of the "united front," its first clear indication came the week after the "Easter revolt." In protest against the irresponsible rhetoric of violence used by SDS extremists, the Free University General Student Committee (FU-AstA) chairman resigned. Among cries of "liberal shit," the theologian Professor Helmut Gollwitzer called the use of violence by a student minority "the most lunatic piece of advice possible at this moment." And the editor of the "semiofficial organ" of the APO, the *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, inveighed against the "adventurist" mis-

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[82] "Rechenschaftsbericht des Bundesvorstandes," 23rd Delegate Conference of the SDS, *Neue Kritik*, 50 (October 1968), 69.

[83] Cf. *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 16 April 1968, passim; ibid., 20 April 1968.

takes of the APO which threatened to isolate it from potential bases of support among the population.[84] This criticism served as a portent of the subsequent "seizure" of the news-sheet's premises by "antiauthoritarians" and the splitting away of their organization.

The second and third readings of the government's bill, amended and now approved by the SPD though still opposed by the trade unions, provided the last major occasion for the APO to appear as a united force. The focal point of a broadly-based protest was to be a "March on Bonn," which even the SDS felt compelled to support. Simultaneously, however, a two-pronged attack was launched. One part was in the universities and aimed particularly at the social science institutes, where the old value-free and therefore "counter-revolutionary" science was to be replaced by a "committed" science. Red flags blossomed forth, institutes were renamed after Luxemburg, Liebknecht or, in the case of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, after Karl Marx. Administration buildings were occupied in actions which frequently took on a "Happening" character,[85] although the rationale was a serious one: the dissatisfaction with the "Critical University" for diverting the student radicals from the center of "scientific production" and preventing them from engaging in genuinely "revolutionary" action. The "productive premises themselves" had to be occupied and utilized.[86] The other prong, which had far less impact, was the attempt to mobilize leftist trade union functionaries and members for strike action, and, if possible, a general strike against the passage of emergency legislation. It met with minimal response, even from such "Left" trade union leaders as Otto Brenner and deepened the abyss between them and the "antiauthoritarian" wing of the APO.[87] The failure to prevent the passage of the emergency laws by means of discussion and protest on the part of the "Liberal-Left" academic establishment,[88] the total ineffectiveness of

[84] *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 20 April 1968, pp. 6-8.

[85] For criticism and defense of some of these actions, see *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 25 May 1968, pp. 5-6; ibid., 8 June 1968, pp. 11-12; ibid., 12 June 1968, pp. 6-7.

[86] "The Critical University stood in danger of developing into an adult education extension college (*Volkshochschule*), into a mere correction in addition to the regular university enterprise" (Rechenschaftsbericht, *Neue Kritik*, 50 [October 1968], 79).

[87] *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 May 1968.

[88] On May 28 a galaxy of academics and intellectuals, including T. Adorno and R. Augstein, had organized a public protest meeting in Frankfurt which lasted all day and was carried by Hessian radio and TV. ("Aufruf zum Widerstand in klimatisierter Kuehle, " ibid., 29 May 1968.)

the mass march on Bonn, and the collapse of student efforts to arouse the working class to strike action had entirely diverse effects on the various groups composing the APO. This confirmed the SDS' conviction to have done with united front alliances and "big show" mass actions aiming at an appearance of legality.[89] It caused the "orthodox" (SED-friendly) wing of the APO to renew its warning against "left-wing radicalism" in an increasingly aggressive controversy with the "antiauthoritarians."[90] This led to the expulsion of the so-called "CP-faction" (five members) from the SDS after open antagonism and an exchange of blows at the World Youth Conference in Sofia among members of the West German delegation.[91]

As a result, the radical-democratic group within the APO made a vigorous denunciation of "pseudo-revolutionary" activism, describing it as in danger of succumbing to a cult of violence and the loss of "humanism." An estrangement had been already latent at the Congress in Hanover when Professor Habermas warned against the abandonment of the achievements of constitutional democracy in the process of violating the "rules of the game." This now erupted into the open: at first in June 1968 with a much publicized lecture by Habermas in which he accused the leaders of the SDS of "infantilism, bordering on pathological 'illusionism' " (Wahnvorstellung);[92] and finally with his resort to police aid to expel a group of students who had "liberated" the sociological seminar. In dogmatic commitment to a single theoretical approach and its instrumentalization as an immediate tool of revolutionary praxis—the position of the "occupiers"—Habermas saw the abandonment of rational discussion, genuine science, and "consequently the basis of humanism."[93] In opposition to this, he suggested "Radical Reformism," attacking the prevalent achievement orientation and implying the need for "fundamental changes in the system of production" as the only presently feasible political approach.[94]

[89] "Rechenschaftsbericht," 23rd Delegate Conference, *Neue Kritik*, 50 (October 1968), 74.

[90] This is illustrated by the use of a long excerpt (slightly altered) from Lenin's tract, "Left-Wing Radicalism—An Infantile Disorder," by the editor of *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 8 June 1968, p. 9) and the replies in following issues.

[91] Cf. "SDS in Sofia," *Facit Actuell* 3, mimeo. (Cologne, 1968). This documentation was edited by the "CP-Faction."

[92] Juergen Habermas, *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform*, pp. 197-98.

[93] Ibid., 245.

[94] Ibid., 48-50.

VI

Caught in the conundrum of the commitment to revolutionary action in a situation recognized as nonrevolutionary, the "Actionist" groups—no longer ideologically as "antiauthoritarian" in 1969 as they had been in 1967-68[95]—have pursued a rigorous course of liquidating all organizations which appear to them to impede genuine revolutionary action "at the base." An action, however successful it may appear in extending Left influence, is considered futile and even harmful, because of the danger of reformist "integration" by the system, unless it can be turned into "revolutionary"[96] form. Many "Republican Clubs"—spreading across the country from Berlin within a brief period[97]—had originally been founded as centers of Left discussion, but have since been split, dissolved or transformed.[98] Under the ironic slogan, "Better to win divided than lose united," leading Berlin "antiauthoritarians" initiated a campaign "of separation from all liberals, traditionalists, and Socialist Unity Party West Berlin (SEW) alliance politicians."[99] A "Socialist Center" as a coordinating base for the various "groups working in relative isolation" is to replace the Berlin Republican Center.[100]

Having captured the leadership of the national student federation (VDS), the "antiauthoritarians" proceeded to liquidate the organization altogether on the federal level. In future it was to support revolutionary student activities at the base, without regard to the need for an organization capable of negotiating with governmental institutions[101] on behalf of the entire student body. Outside the university realm, in publishing enterprises and theaters, a

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[95] See report on "Arbeitskonferenz," cited in n. 69.

[96] An example is the successful spontaneous mass action against streetcar fare increases in Hanover, subsequently denounced by the SDS which had tried in vain to convert it into an openly revolutionary action. (*Berliner Extra-Dienst,* 28 June 1969).

[97] See Claus Gennrich, "Die Republikanischen Clubs," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (supplement), 13 April 1968.

[98] Thus the RC Hamburg and Hanover have been dissolved (*Berliner Extra-Dienst,* 29 October 1969) and the RC Freiburg split (ibid., 4 June 1969).

[99] Ibid., 7 May 1969.

[100] Its location should permit close cooperation with "the proletariat" as a first step toward the establishment of a socialist mass organization. This marks a turn away on the part of the heterogeneous "antiauthoritarian" wing from the emphasis on extreme decentralization. *Rote Presse Korrespondenz,* 20, 7 July 1969, 10-11.

[101] *Berliner Extra-Dienst,* 11 June 1969.

wave of "occupations" and antiauthoritarian experiments has expressed the widespread "revolutionary" consciousness which strains against the fetters imposed on socialist producers of literature and art by the conditions of a capitalist market economy.[102]

In evaluating the impact of the APO on the 1969 federal election, it is necessary to separate several aspects: party organizations, the campaign, and the election results. Furthermore, it would be necessary to distinguish between the indirect impact, the atmospheric change, the "politicization" which were expressed in larger and livelier turnouts for meetings, the replacement of straight addresses by discussions, and, finally, the decided leftward turn of the FDP, which obviously cost it votes but simultaneously rendered a coalition with the SPD feasible, and the direct effect which the intervention—or nonintervention (in the case of vote abstention) by members of the APO—had on the election.

In spite of the widely-shared attitude of scepticism and even hostility to the parliamentary system and the established major parties, the APO approached the election in total disarray. Even the SDS was split among those who favored the establishment of a new Left party "to prevent a vote once again for the lesser evil SPD or, as the only opposition, the NPD,"[103] and those who saw no opportunity to use parliament, as in Lenin's days, as an "arena of the class struggle,"[104] who feared either a mishmash of reformist demands as a concession to a united front party or sharp controversies about demands and tactics which would weaken rather than strengthen the movement.[105] A Left "united front" was not feasible without the inclusion of the DDR-oriented Communists; and this could hardly hope to avoid the "suffocating embrace of the SED."[106] The controversy ceased to be academic when the "Socialist Center," founded in 1967 by representatives of various groups[107] as an attempt to take in *all* groupings of the radical Left, transformed itself by various stages into an electoral organization and finally into a "front-type" party, the ADF (Aktionsgemein-

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[102] The movement can best be followed from week to week in the "Feuilleton" of *Die Zeit.*

[103] Helmut Schauer, "Der lange Marsch vor der Institution des Parlamentes," *Neue Kritik*, 45 (December 1967), 5.

[104] SDS-Bundesvorstand, *Neue Kritik*, 46 (February 1968), 12.

[105] Walmot Falkenberg and Hartmut Dabrowski "Langer Marsch-kurze Perspektiven," ibid., 15ff.

[106] Fritz Lamm, "Brief an einige Genossen: zur Bundestagswahl 1969," ibid., 77.

[107] R. Seeliger, *Opposition*, p. 145.

schaft Demokratischer Fortschritt—Action Community for Democratic Progress] which rested heavily on the newly-legalized Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP). By simultaneously committing itself to a thoroughly traditionalist and "realistically" moderate campaign and refusing to reject the Moscow-oriented support of the SED West Berlin and the DKP, the new party was bound to offend the antiparliamentarian militants as well as the anti-Bolshevik constitutional socialists. Particularly after August 1968, when the ADF refused to take a stand disapproving the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, it lost the support of all but a few members of the New Left. Thus, of fifteen prominent "leftists"— an admittedly haphazard and by no means "representative" sample—who were asked by an editor of *Pardon* how they would vote, five declared for the SPD (of these, however, three were TV-editors), four announced that they would abstain, two opted for the ADF, one for the FDP, and one was unable to decide.[108] How the APO adherents ultimately voted is unknown, but because of the expected dispersion and the high voting participation in the election it is evident that, as voters or nonvoters, they failed to exert significant influence on the outcome.[109] On the other hand, those groups on the edge of the APO which, like the Young Socialists and some members of the SHB, continued to work in and through the SPD, were apparently able to affect the nomination process, at least to the extent that many candidates had to fight hard for nomination against determined left-wing opposition in their constituency organizations and occasionally lost out to them.[110] In spite of some grandiloquent discussions by SDS members about the use which would be made of election meetings to "unmask the sham of parliamentarism," the APO intervention fell far short of expectations or apprehensions; "it was limited to a series of unconnected actions with very unequal success."[111] Contrary to the logic of its argumentation, the APO fire was not primarily directed against the SPD "traitors," but, above all, against the NPD speakers and,

[108] Peter Knorr, "Was waehlen Deutschlands Linke?" *Pardon* (September 1969), 9-13.

[109] A first, superficial analysis shows that the position of SPD candidates on the right or left of the inner-party spectrum apparently had no effect on their "first votes."

[110] *Der Spiegel*, 7 July 1969, (p. 33) reports that the number of contested nominations had increased from twenty-three SPD districts in 1965 to seventy-four in 1969.

[111] *Die Zeit*, 3 October 1969, p. 65. Altogether only 3.4 percent of the non-NPD meetings were disturbed.

to a lesser extent, against prominent CDU/CSU leaders.[112] While because of the APO this was the "hottest" election campaign of postwar Germany, only on four occasions were non-NPD speakers forced to give up in the face of resistance. Bonn was still not Weimar!

It is unlikely that the outcome of the election will significantly affect the theoretical positions within the APO with one exception: the alternative of a new socialist party to the left of the SPD has been thoroughly discredited. The "little coalition" offers one segment of the APO the hope of continuing its emancipatory work within the SPD and the trade unions.[113] Other groups see a better chance to use the "wild strikes" and increased feeling of alienation expected to result from the integration of the trade union leadership into the establishment for revolutionary work "at the base."[114] Because "the masses" are still unaffected by the antiparliamentarism of the APO and because the working class continues "fixated" on the SPD, the fundamental question facing the APO—which is one of revolutionary praxis in the absence of the "revolutionary subject"—remains unanswered. Because no action promises success, the situation is open for every experiment. In spite of the renewed emphasis on "the proletariat" as the irreplaceable agent of socialist revolution, however, it is the universities where the radical opposition is likely to persist and obtain its more signal successes.[115] What the long-range effect of this "cultural revolution" on the German social and political system will be must presently remain a matter for speculation.

[112] All meetings with Adolf von Thadden and many smaller NPD meetings were disturbed; twenty-one where Franz Josef Strauss appeared and twenty of those where Kurt Georg Kiesinger spoke. (Ibid.)

[113] Cf. "Die Linke nach der Wahl," *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 4 October 1969, p. 1.

[114] *Rote Presse Korrespondenz*, 33, 3 October 1969, pp. 1-2.

[115] The election of a leftish assistant as the first president of the FU-Berlin and the powerful pressure exerted in several departments by "Red Cells" are significant symptoms. See, e.g., *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 December 1969; "Machtverschiebung an der FU," *Berliner Extra-Dienst*, 26 November 1969, pp. 1-2.