

## Chapitre/Chapter 34

### GIs under Siege: The Turbulent 1980s

#### The German Peace Movement Confronts the U.S. Military

Lou Marin

The 1980s in Germany have been turbulent because never since the era of nazi-barbarism had there been so many people on the streets, active and seemingly politically aware. And the goals of the movement were so different from nazi-times: hundreds of thousands were calling and campaigning for peace and against German and other governments that were - in their eyes gambling with it. It was a time of tremendous hope, especially at the first half of the eighties. It was a hope of challenging the power of the governments and the military in a nonviolent manner and of ending the cold war, which was threatening Europe to the brink of seven minutes for atomic weaponry-overkill (seven minutes was the flight time of a Pershing missile from FRG to Soviet Union).

The first mass manifestation was on October 10, 1981 with 300.000 participants in Bonn, the last of that kind was the Hunsrück mass demonstration in 1986 with about 180.000 participants. You could trace back peace activism to a much earlier time and it surely is possible to go on with activities until the Gulf War in 1991. But the typical character of the peace movement against the deployment of 572 Cruise Missiles and Pershing-11 in Europe, with all the 108 Pershings and with 96 Cruise Missiles to be deployed in West Germany, can be found only when the time of the movement is contained to 1981-86.<sup>i</sup>

In 1979 I started as an anti-nuclear and peace activist. I wrote about the peace movement since 1982 and joined the editorial board of the journal Graswurzelrevolution in 1984, which was then the most important journal of the independent stream of the peace movement covering the activities of the libertarian nonviolent direct action groups. It will be difficult for me to really detach from my own experience for analyzing the peace mass movement in a scientific manner. So in this text there will be a mingling of a subjective looking on the movement as well as a scientific and detached approach to it. Hopefully, this might be a fruitful combination.

#### **A "German" Movement?**

The term "German" peace movement was only given to the movement from critics afterwards. At the time there was no such thing like a national prename. At the beginning the movement perceived itself to be internationalist. As the NATO-decision of 1979 has been to deploy nuclear rockets in several European states, it was first of all a Western European movement with similar expressions in Great Britain the Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy. Only France cannot be added to the extent of a mass movement and later the most intellectual critics of the German peace movement came from France.<sup>ii</sup> If anything about a national character of the movement can be said one has to remember that the earliest movement against the deployment of the missiles has been in the Netherlands, where even the government only agreed to the NATO decision on the condition to decide on the real deployment once again and later, after assessing the proposed talks on disarmament.<sup>iii</sup> So the peace movement in West Germany was called to be a "Dutch disease" much more than a

specific movement of German character, even though most of the missiles had to be deployed in West Germany, so the nuclear threat was biggest there. After all, it would be much more correct to talk of a peace movement in West Germany than of a "German Peace Movement".

Although there has been a long tradition of a more radical peace activism before, the anti-nuclear Freeze-Campaign in the United States started right after the message of the big mass demonstrations of Europe in Amsterdam, Brussels, Bonn, London or Rome in 1981 reached America. Especially the news of the Bonn mass demonstration of 1981 ran through the US-American press and catalyzed the one million people demonstration in New York Central Park on the June 12, 1982. The movements were influencing each other, and in West Germany there was the enthusiastic talk of the "other America", although the perceptions often were exaggerating the size and the strength of the movements. Also, the goals of the mainstream peace movements in Europe and the U.S. were different: the moderate demand for Freeze was different from even the most moderate European nuclear disarmament tendency.<sup>iv</sup> Moreover, anti-communism was seen more relaxed within the peace movements in Europe and West Germany.<sup>v</sup>

### **German Nationalism and Anti-Americanism within the Peace Movement.**

Although the causes and the first perceptions of the peace movement in West Germany were internationalism it turned out that nationalist ideologies and anti-American tendencies within the movement grew stronger the longer the movement lasted and the more it not only had to express protest but to advocate alternatives in security politics. The so-called "old" peace movement in West Germany during the 1950s against the formation of the West German army, the Bundeswehr, and against NATO-integration can be traced back to causes like protest against the partition of Germany, which was perceived to be stabilized by West-integration and the rearmament politics of Adenauer. This was especially the perception of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). So here nationalism was the root of mainstream participation within a peace movement. But now, in the 1980s, it was the other way round: the cause of participation was peace and the fear of being victim of the nuclear arms race. But the consequences of protest, the discussions of alternative security systems, lead almost inevitably to the questions of neutrality, national or European sovereignty.<sup>vi</sup>

How difficult this could be shall be shown here with the example of Dan Diner, one of the most important German intellectuals who criticized the peace movement against the Gulf War in 1991 as to be anti-American and triggered the mainstream perception in the 1990s to look at the peace movement as an overwhelmingly anti-American movement.<sup>vii</sup> As early as 1982 he questioned the rising discussions of the national question within the peace movement in West Germany. But at that time he not only warned not to exaggerate these tendencies but he also had to concede that nearly any pragmatic critic of the prevailing security system and the Cold War will lead to alternative concepts of security which will nearly inevitably touch the German national question. If you question the military bloc system even on a very pragmatic basis, you have to discuss in one way or another a tendency of political dissociation from the U.S., as an answer to the perceived military dissociation of the U.S. from Europe by leaving Europe as a potential battle field of future times by deploying nuclear weapons. As these goals of dissociation have never been very concrete and have never been discussed to a consensual solution within the movement - like the protest against the deployment of rockets has -, the discussion on the German question rushed into this vacuum. It was fuelled not only by oppositional politicians within the Social Democratic Party, like Erhard Eppler, who wanted this then ruling party, the SPD, to turn against the facts which chancellor Helmut Schmidt has fixed by demanding the deployment of the missiles himself. This was fumed

after the end of the SPD-ruling era in 1982, and during the mass manifestations of 1983 Willy Brandt already stated that "we" - the Germans as a nation - have been cheated by NATO. From that time during all the years of the 1980s the SPD portrayed herself as to oppose the deployment "in the German interest".<sup>viii</sup> But the national question was fuelled, so Diner in his 1982 analysis, moreover by several leftist groups within the movement, be it Maoist parties who paralleled national liberation in the so-called "Third World" with a perceived national liberation by German unification after the revolutionary destruction of the military blocs, or be it the GDR-oriented Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP) or their front organizations, who argued with the historical example of the Stalin Note of 1952 in order to show that historical communist politics would have given German unification under neutrality like it has done in Austria. And the national question was fuelled, says Diner at last, by some kind of cultural critique: the ecologist movement of the 1970s has triggered a feeling of Heimat, which meant not very much more than "native place" in a regional, anti-centralizing sense, that- should be secured against alienating big industrial society and projects like nuclear power plants. Within the mingling of the ecologist and the peace movement at the beginning of the 1980s, this term of Heimat was changing character and widened to the meaning of the whole national territory: Heimat was now the German nation, threatened by foreign weaponry and alien military. This view corresponded to a cultural discourse on national identity, which was deeply rooted in German culture: and that is the tendency to contradict the Anglo-Saxon tradition of civilization with the German term culture. In this sense, it is perceived to divide the traditions in a biological manner. The German culture is perceived to be more deep-thinking, romantic, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, whereas the purely rational Anglo-Saxon civilization is perceived to be imposed on the whole world.<sup>ix</sup>

How tricky and complex the situation was, may be shown by the fact that a militant critique of the peace movement, a paper from the Revolutionary Cells in 1984 criticizes tendencies of nationalism and anti-Americanism within the peace movement in the same way that Dan Diner did in 1982, but cites as example -for these tendencies no one other than Dan Diner himself with a dissociation- statement like: "We try to create our own European politics - if this is the alternative, I say yes and support it. I would even support it, if it would be a capitalist politics sans phrase. (Dan Diner)<sup>x</sup> The critic of anti-Americanism is exposed to be anti-American here.

But German nationalism and anti-Americanism within the peace movement has never been simply a question of inevitabilism in rejecting NATO-strategies. There have been several ideological and personal aspects that turned out to be disastrous in the 1990s, when these currents became one of many sources that fuelled dangerous kinds of nationalism and right-wing-extremism in Germany. One of these ideological aspects was the thesis of Europe or even West Germany being a hostage of NATO or the United States. This ideological figure came often directly from the ranks of the anti-nuclear opposition within the SPD. The deployment of the missiles had - in this view - the "function of hostage-taking, it should keep the heart of the European Alliance, the Federal Republic (of Germany), close to line."<sup>xi</sup>

Former SPD-state secretary Günter Gans even said, the FRG will become "an American province in the sense of the Roman Imperium."<sup>xii</sup> Some independent left wing analyses came to the conclusion, that the deployment of the rockets is part of an inner-imperialist competition situation between the U.S. economy and the European Union. In this view, the economy of the European Union has become strong during the last decades and as the U.S. economy has been perceived to be too weak to cope with Europe's import-export-balances economically, it takes Europe politically and militarily into hostage to keep up the first rank in

world economics for U.S. economy. At the end of the Carter era the U.S. household balance was considerably low, which was one reason for the following high-rent policy during the Reagan era.<sup>xiii</sup>

Another ideological figure has been the comparison of the potential overkill within the Cold War of nuclear weapons to the manifest historical reality of the Holocaust. In this sense it was assumed several times, that the “Europeanization” of the Cold War could lead to a calculated, regional nuclear war. “But this war could be the Holocaust for Western Europe and the Federal Republic of Germany”.<sup>xiv</sup> The one who made this comparison here was Alfred Mechttersheimer, then politician of the Green Party and a widely recognized expert in questions of peace research. Today Mechttersheimer is one of the most important intellectuals of right-wing extremism in Germany and head of the so-called Deutschlandbewegung (Movement for Germany), an organization which, for example, made campaigns in coalitions with brutal Neo-Nazi groups against an Exhibition on the Crimes of the Wehrmacht 1941-44, which was shown in many German towns during the 1990s. Today, Mechttersheimer has radicalized his right-wing extremist tendencies, but in 1983 he could write without any considerable objection within the ranks of the peace movement rubbish sentences like these: „We should not forget, that the objective level of national discrimination of the Germans was incomparably higher after the Second World War than it was after the First World War. It is probable, that both German states are today practically in a situation of occupied countries, only because the Germans have not yet recognized this situation properly. It is obvious, that nationalist and xenophobic groups want to exploit that monstrous potential of injustice, that has come together here over four decades.”<sup>xv</sup>

The interpretation of West Germany to be an occupied country has been an ideological figure, that has been used by many intellectuals and activists as well during the peace movement. Often this figure was combined with juridical discussions on the sovereignty of the West German constitution. Mechttersheimer, at that time, showed himself to be restrained, cautioning at the right-wing extremists only in order to publicly push the nationalist cause. At that time this was called to be a “progressive nationalism”, which was held to be the opposite of negative nationalism. Even in the independent peace movement of the left there have been problematic figures within strategies of a German withdrawal from NATO membership, which were pushed especially from communist groups like the Kommunistische Bund (Communist Federation) and which were opposed by nonviolent groups with the aim of dissolving NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization in a parallel manner. The advocates of NATO-withdrawal argued that a neutral Federal Republic of Germany was perceived to be very much defensive and unable to acquire access to nuclear weapons, whereas it has been a reality that the rise of West Germany to a strong national economy and a considerable world power has been possible only within NATO. Although this might be true until today, this perception was playing down the dangers and potentials of nationalist ambitions of a German state outside NATO.<sup>xvi</sup>

It is very difficult to estimate the spreading and the impact of these ideological figures, whether they were dominating in their real nationalist and anti-American sense or not. It depends on this assessment to conclude to the degree of the hostile atmosphere the American GIs had to face during that time in Western Germany. For some reason one has to relativate some of these figures. For example, not any kind of critique of civilization was meant to be nationalist or anti-American. On the contrary: the critique of industrial civilization was an outcome of the ecologist movement and directed against the European cultural heritage as well as the American as well as against the tradition of soviet socialist industrialization.

Moreover, the peace movement in West Germany received it as a thesis from Edward P. Thompson of the British peace movement. He called industrial civilization, be it capitalist or state-socialist to be “exterminist” in the sense that the military-industrial complexes in each civilization tend to occupy resources not for civilian life but for the needs of the military strategies. This leads to more and more sophisticated weaponry systems which make it possible to wipe out the whole planet because of their inherent driving power to cling only to their inner technical rationality - unable to foresee undesired consequences for human beings. The thesis of Edward P. Thompson was very popular and widely discussed within the peace movement in West Germany.<sup>xvii</sup> Out of these discussions emerged the *Movement for European Disarmament* (END) with a clear internationalist outlook, which extended not only to Eastern Germany, but also to Czechoslovakia and especially to Poland, where these streams of the independent peace movement supported the rise of the independent workers' union of Solidarnosc. In this whole discussion on exterminism there has never been an accepted figure of culture connotated solely with Germany and civilization connotated solely to Britain or the U.S.

### **Who was Anti-American and who Opposed Anti-Americanism and why?**

As it is questionable to talk about the “German Peace Movement” without labelling it with a contents that was not thoroughly intentional, it is also not justified to talk about “the” peace movement. It has been a very heterogeneous movement with several streams and currents, with professional, party-oriented organizations and also with a strong independent grassroots wing. Sociological research has proposed three possibilities to categorize the peace movement. One approach was goal-oriented and categorized the streams of the movement to their social aims: out of this there came a partition into three, that is leftist, Christian and alternative streams of the movement. Or this was categorized into Old Left, New Left, Pacifists/Christian and Green/Alternative. A second approach was status-oriented and comprised about ten organizational types like parties, youth associations, coordinating groups/coalitions, professional interest groups up to personal associations. And the third approach may be called system-oriented and made a division into traditional policy orientation and new/alterative policy orientation. To the traditional spectre it was counted the traditional communist parties as well as traditional religious groups with a close touch to church politics, moreover parts of the SPD and the unions, as well as their youth organizations. The alternative spectre comprised radical Christian groups, the Green Party, independent or autonomous peace initiatives and grassroots-/nonviolent-action- groups.<sup>xviii</sup> A special organizational centre of the movement was the Koordinationsausschuß der Friedensbewegung (Coordinating Committee of the Peace Movement, KA) in Bonn, where the traditional spectre dominated the alternative spectre. As a result the KA oriented very much for central mass demonstrations to influence official politicians, whereas the independent peace movement oriented for decentralized and direct nonviolent actions at military or deployment sites of Bundeswehr or NATO in order to disturb military day-to-day practice. In the KA there were delegates of about 30 heterogeneous organizations and associations, of which the main spectres were Christian, independent traditional communist, social democrats and green party-oriented.<sup>xix</sup>

In the view of the independent groups of the peace movement the KA was a setback to regional and decentralized grassroots-politics, because the KA by its decision-making managed to bring in a hierarchy into the peace movement: whereas other movements like the movement against nuclear power plants or the women's movement had no coordinating centre and because of this could be dominated by basic-democratic decision bodies of the activists themselves, now in the peace movement there has been a body where more and more peace

functionaries grew out of their basic-democratic group structures and made politics by their name and reputations.<sup>xx</sup>

Although there can be always traced single examples of nationalism and anti-Americanism in nearly every spectre of the peace movement it is possible to say that most influential in disseminating these issues have been persons and organizations of the "traditional" spectre of the peace movement, be it SPD-oppositionals like Eppler or be it GDR-oriented communists. In all of their perceptions they analyzed NATO to be US-dominated and wanted to have a foreign policy of the FRG that was getting more independent from this dominance, be it in a future within NATO or outside of it. To gain marks in this tendency of dissociation they had to play the national identity gamble more or less frankly. Their aim was to use the peace movement as a lobby, as a pressure group in the conventional sense of that policy. So they perceived the official Schmidt- and sometimes even later the Kohl-Administration as not to have a real national interest in the deployment of the missiles, although their policy has always been the other way round. These peace lobbyists perceived politics within the -FRG to be a mere rational discourse, where politicians erred in their perception and could be convinced of another kind of peace politics by simple arguments. The real interests in the Cold War were perceived to be within NATO or the U.S. Administration. This perception encouraged nationalist and anti-American arguments and ideologies and dealt with West Germany and the West German population as a bloc without any significant contradictions. This perception of the "traditional" spectre was deeply challenged by the independent peace movement and their spectres, which included at that time the Green Party - at least the regional basic groups of them -, some violent autonomous and anti-imperialist groups, some Maoist-communist groups and the radical antimilitarist nonviolent direct action groups.

Within that spectre there was a perception of the autonomous/anti-imperialist groups that the U.S.-Administration and military is the key root of all imperialism - but the influence of this spectre wasn't very strong as the means of direct action as to be nonviolent was overwhelmingly accepted within the independent peace movement. So these groups were on the fringe or even outside the real movement - they often simply weren't accepted to be part of it. What was accepted was an analysis that there was a national interest in deploying the missiles and that the peace movement activists must challenge and light their own government. Out of this independent and libertarian perception nationalist and anti-American motives could be effectively contained. Most independent groups wanted the peace movement to be radicalized into an antimilitarist and system-critical movement. The masses of the demonstrations were to be seen as general discontent and a potential to be radicalized. There was a critique of mere nuclear pacifism within the traditional mainstream of the peace movement and a tendency to analyze the national state as to be one main cause of wars in the world. The grassroots- and nonviolent direct action groups tried successfully - to a certain extent - to organize road blockades, campaigns for conscientious objectors and disturbances of manoeuvres in order to challenge the state system in West Germany. In all these cases they always oriented to comprise a vast amount of direct actions against their own national army, the Bundeswehr. For example, the main blockade which triggered blockades to become a means of mass direct action within the peace movement was the blockade of a short range missile site of Lance-rockets held by the Bundeswehr in Großengstingen in southern West Germany. It was specifically looked for a Bundeswehr- and a short range missile site to orient the peace movement to an antimilitarist movement.<sup>xxi</sup> The intention could not always be realized and blockades soon deteriorated into sometimes defensive and passive kind of symbolic actions that reduced the character of material disturbance of military day-to-day practice,<sup>xxii</sup> but out of these discussions and the intention to challenge the state as a cause of

war, especially the own national state, there developed within the ranks of the grassroots groups a severe criticism of nationalism and anti-Americanism. This critique traced all kinds of nationalism within the peace movement, be it within social democrat, green or autonomous spectres:

At the big demonstration in Bonn of 10th of October 1981 the guiding motives were shown. The speeches were not those of confessed war resisters, of antipatriotic fellows, but those of German patriots. As if there could be no better arguments against war than patriotism! (...) German nationalism will get dangerous within very short time. (...) To appeal to nationalism because of fear of war is like committing suicide because of fear of death. At these issues the moderate nationalists within SPD and Green Party are working, as well as other spectres. They dare to call themselves a leftist alternative and criticize the USA occasionally more for not obeying the 'sovereignty of other states' than the consequences for the afflicted persons. They focus on the 'foreign' troops (...) and are proud for their anti-Americanism, which already challenges hamburger shops as bad examples of imperialism. When these groups that call themselves autonomous - we don't know why - cry 'occupants leave' or draw pictures on the wall and little posters that show how Donald Duck ties up his bundle (...) then they think themselves to be very radical. Another grade of this is the burning of American national flags and the carrying of gallows with puppets to be burnt - a delighting showdown of sadistic power fantasies. It is a demonstration for death penalty, not against war. Fighting foreign occupation is anything else but a fight against power systems. They will understand only, when it is too late!<sup>xxiii</sup>

It turned out that it has been too late in the 1990s in Germany, when Nazism and racism were rising. Probably it is correct to say that these lands of critique remained a minority within the peace movement. But then it is also very much correct to say that the main propagandists of nationalism and anti-Americanism within the peace movement have been - apart from the autonomous and anti-imperialist spectre - the oppositional social democrats who won over their Party after the toppling of chancellor Schmidt, and some intellectuals like Mechttersheimer within the Green Party - especially those who wanted to change that Green Party into an ordinary power capturing machine as it turned out to become during the 1990s. So in a way the same red-green coalition was then fostering nationalism and anti-Americanism that is nowadays in power and claims to be the closest ally of the U.S. military! Within the independent and grassroots spectre of the peace movement there prevailed another kind of cultural outlook to the USA. Many of the contents of the strategies nonviolent direct action groups adopted and practiced within the peace movement have been taken over from U.S.-traditions and movements: the concept of nonviolent direct action, the means of blocking roads, of sit-ins and so on have been learned from the black civil rights movement of Martin Luther King Jr. The concept of civil disobedience and also some parts of a critique of civilization has been adopted from the writings of Henry David Thoreau. These were key concepts of the independent peace movement with occasional considerable spreading into the ranks of the mainstream of the peace movement. There were special support campaigns for intellectuals or activists from the US-peace movement beginning with Daniel Ellsberg and ending with Eric Larsen. There were close relationships to the radical US-peace movement, be it the Catholic Workers, the Livermore Action Group, the Ploughshare-group of the brothers Berrigan, the War Resisters' League, several Vietnam-Veterans Organizations, to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) or the Military Counseling Network (MCN). During all the 1980s grassroots groups in Germany disseminated a brochure of the CCCO to GIs in the U.S. military with the title "Getting Out".<sup>xxiv</sup> The practical support for GIs culminated finally at the beginning of the nineties, when the formation of deserters

networks and the close contacts to MCN served GIs who went "absence without leave" during the time of the Gulf War of 1990 and 1991.<sup>xxv</sup>

In this sense the adoption of key issues of nonviolent direct action by the grassroots groups in Germany as well as the close contacts to the "other America", or the U.S.-Peace movement shows the necessity to think twice about a term like anti-Americanism. The term has a tendency to neglect relations to different sections of one country, a tendency to describe certain moves and actions to be anti-American, when it is directed only against the U.S.-ruling elite or the power holders of U.S. military. The term isn't open for evaluating and considering properly the high esteem that spectres like the nonviolent action groups showed for U.S. cultural heritage and traditions that are outside the establishment. So the political and historical discourse about anti-Americanism within German social movements runs into the danger of exaggerating the amount of anti-Americanism when protest against U.S. governmental decisions is equaled in a misunderstanding manner with the rejection of American culture, let alone the American people. And this discourse on the other hand runs into danger of devaluating the communication and connection with non-establishment people in the U.S. Moreover, this discourse may lead and may have led GIs in Germany to a feeling of rejection and confrontation that doesn't mirror the intentions of many activists: especially physically there has been no intention of injuring or hurting any GI during his or her services in Germany, at least not out of the peace movement of the 1980s. The real and legitimate challenge the peace movement expressed was to urge GIs to think twice about the possibility of conscientious objection, in proper words: to put off the uniform as soon as possible. But that was no specific challenge to GIs of the US - it was expressed in the same manner and as well to Germans who went to the Bundeswehr. The GIs were challenged in this sense not as Americans, but as soldiers of the world.

### **Nonviolence as a Key Mode of the Peace Movement and its Intentional Impact on the Physical Security of GIs in Germany.**

During the 1970s there has been a different challenge for the GIs in West Germany. Black GIs had occasionally participated in protests of the German students and resisted against racism within the US army. On the other hand, in the circumstances of the fall of the student movement and the last years of the Vietnam war there have been several physical attacks on GIs in Germany. The worst was two bombs, probably laid by the Marxist-Leninist guerilla group Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction, RAF), in a building of Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg, which killed three soldiers and wounded four. A short time before, a US-officer was killed at a similar bomb attack in Wiesbaden. There have also been some atrocities and cases of rape from some GIs with problems of drug addiction which fed the alienation of the GIs from German people. In the mid-1970s these cases have been reduced due to the end of conscription in the United States, due to U.S. Military measures against drug counseling and due to improvements in racial equality within the army.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Only the bombings of the RAF went on until the late 1980s: there have been several physical attacks on high-ranking officers of the U.S. army, and on August 8, 1985 there was an explosion of an auto bomb at the military part of the U.S. Air Base in Frankfurt. It killed two and injured eleven. To get access to an "US Armed Forces Identity Card" in order to drive the car into the Air Base, the RAF killed young 20-year-old GI Edward Pimental. This killing was criticized from the peace movement as well as leftist groups as a "sign of a lack of revolutionary moral." But the RAF legitimized the murder of Pimental in a declaration of August 25, 1985 as follows: "We have killed Edward Pimental, a specialist for flight defense, who volunteered for the U.S. army and is in the FRG for three months. He has dismissed his

earlier job in order to get quick money. We needed his ID-Card to get into the Airbase. For us US soldiers in the FRG aren't perpetrators as well as victims, we do not have this naive view of social workers on them. After Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada and the official implementation of the Air-Land-Battle doctrine, the offensive strategy for Blitzkriege in the Third World and attacks against the socialist states in the east, every GI has to face the fact that he is paid to wage war, everyone has to consider the fact that it is war - and to decide. Obviously this is not an insane Anti-Americanism, as the counter-propaganda tells. (...) Military bases, installations, commanding centres of the US army and NATO are areas of war. <sup>xxvii</sup>

Here is an ideological figure to parallel Nazi Blitzkriege with the wars the U.S. army leads - in order to reduce the contradiction of Nazi and U.S. armies. What is important here is the fact that this truly insane kind of anti-Americanism was never accepted in the 1980s, neither by the New Left nor by any group of the peace movement in West Germany. And this is a situation quite different from the early 1970s. The reason was mainly that within the peace movement nonviolence against persons who maybe challenged in other ways, nevertheless, was nearly unanimously consensus: "The pacifist current within the peace movement had a considerable effect of orientation: a lasting peace could only be achieved by peaceful means. In the background of this discussion there was the argument with the counter thesis of the RAF, which was ready to use violence for the goal of a probably better world. The decision in favor of nonviolence and - in abstract terms - the clinging to the relation between means and ends, was taken within the big and socially heterogeneous nonviolent blockade actions of the 1980s. <sup>xxviii</sup>

The physical offence against GIs and even officers of the U.S. army was never tolerated within the peace movement of the 1980s in Germany, although it was well known among the activists that the bombings of Libya in 1986 were coordinated from the EUCOM in Stuttgart, that in 1987 500 missiles were sent to Iran from Ramstein as part of the weapons-for-hostages deal, and that most of the military support for the Gulf War in 1991 was carried out through the Air Bases of Ramstein and Rhein-Main. <sup>xxix</sup>

In fact, the Red Army Faction was never considered to be part of the peace movement. The nonviolent direct action groups, for example, already criticized their policy thoroughly and from a left radical point of view in 1978. <sup>xxx</sup> In terms of physical danger, it would be correct to say that more than 375 aircraft crashes since 1973 with numerous casualties, the Ramstein air show crash killing 70 people and injuring 400 in 1988 or U.S. Military maneuvers like, for example, Reforger 1988 killing seven people might have been physically more dangerous for GIs than the peace movement in West Germany. <sup>xxxi</sup> But the perception of the GIs then surely was different compared to the early 1970s. The racial and drug problems of the 1970s have been solved as conscription ended and only professionals began to serve in the US army.

Their degree of identification with US policy was relatively high - and triggered a perception of the peace movement in Germany that wasn't able to differ a nonviolent mass movement from the violent politics of a little group that waged an avant-garde war. The GI now mingled the two and combined them in their perception in order to be confronted with a one front battle against the US army. Maybe in this situation it was a mistake of the peace movement not to consider the appeal for conscientious objection of the GIs as a main concept to break up this front-perception. This only happend comparatively late during the campaigning against US-support and army transfers in the preparatory time of the Gulf War 1990 and 1991.

As the peace movement as a mass movement had a widespread consensus, like no other social movement in Germany before, to remain nonviolent even when confronting U.S. Military through nonviolent direct actions, it was proof of its intention to confront the GIs in Germany not physically but solely their conscience of being part of a power that wages war elsewhere in the world and threatens Europe with nuclear overkill - as has been confronted the private of the Bundeswehr as well.

### **Instead of a Conclusion: A Personal Experience.**

Maybe the signs of burning U.S. flags on the streets during demonstrations and other incidents sometimes hindered actively this perception by the GIs. But compared with the 1970s the commitment of the peace movement in Germany to nonviolence was the clearest ever possible and visible sign, that it was no intention of the movement to challenge GIs physically.

I cannot judge and estimate the impact of intentions, the perceptions and misperceptions on each side. I want to tell a personal experience instead: during the 1990s, when new racism and nationalism after the German unification was on the rise in Germany, my nonviolent direct action group in Heidelberg was part of an antiracist alert network in town. Some day in the early nineties, a Jewish family called the alert network in order to tell about a threat of two Nazis, who were always around their house and promised one time to come at night and burn their flat. The husband worked for the military services of the U.S. army headquarters in Heidelberg. After telling us about their situation it was no question for our group to guard the family for the next six weeks, when they were in real trouble. Two people of our groups spent the whole night at their flat, while they and their children were asleep. The guarding times were from 6 pm to 6 am, every day. During that time our group tried to find out where the Nazis lived and what they were doing. Then we openly challenged them, destroyed the storage house of one of them., told him he should leave the Jewish family on their own, and disseminated leaflets to the neighborhood of the other one in order to publicly denounce him as nazi. After some weeks, the main threat was over and the Nazis never dared again to be around the flat of the family. It was a success, little in size, but it was all right. During the time of guarding the family we had several discussions on the efficiency of nonviolent means and the traditions of Martin Luther King. The family was committed to the U.S. army and I told them that I would oppose any future war the Bundeswehr or the U.S. army would wage-- which I then really did in the case of Kosovo/Yugoslavia--but that I would always try to defend GIs or Jewish civilians against any attack from German racists. We didn't come to terms in questions of the necessity of military armies, but this action developed a mutual respect for each other and we all left as friends.

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<sup>i</sup> See the notes for deployment and the last mass demonstration in Yarrow Cleaves, "U.S. Military Presence in Germany", in Joseph Gerson, Bruce Birchard, eds, The Sun Never Sets: Confronting the Network of Foreign U.S. Military Bases (South End Press, Boston, 1991), p. 225-246, here esp. p. 231 and 235. See also Harald Glaser and Hans Horch, Neue Waffen, alte Ordnung. Ziele und Hintergründe der Nachrüstung (Stuttgart, 1983), p. 10.

<sup>ii</sup> See for example André Glucksmann, La force du vertige (Paris, 1983); Philosophie der Abschreckung (Stuttgart, 1984).

<sup>iii</sup> See Leon Wecke and Ben Schennink, "Die 'neue' Friedensbewegung in den Niederlanden", in: Reiner Steinweg ed, Die neue Friedensbewegung. Analysen aus der Friedensforschung (Frankfurt a.M., 1982), p. 284-309. See also Wolf Perdelwitz and Heiner Bremer, Geisel Europa (Berlin, 1981), p.251ff.

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- <sup>iv</sup> See Rolf Langenhuisen, "Peace Movement American Style: Moderat die Bewegung - bescheiden die Erfolge", and Ulrike C. Wasmuth, "Die Perzeption der bundesdeutschen Friedensbewegung in den USA", in Josef Lanning, Hans-Josef Legrand, Helmut Zander, eds, Friedensbewegungen. Entwicklung und Folgen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Europa und den USA (Köln, 1987), p. 193-211 and 212-223.
- <sup>v</sup> See K-W. Brand, D. Büsser, D. Rucht, Aufbruch in eine andere Gesellschaft. Neue Soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik (Frankfurt a.M., New York, 1984), p. 214.
- <sup>vi</sup> See ibid., p. 213.
- <sup>vii</sup> See several articles of and on Dan Diner in Links, the independent journal of his-former organization, the Socialistic Bureau, during early 1991, and a public address he made together with intellectuals like Detlef Claussen and Micha Brumlik in Frankfurt a.M. a few days before the NATO-bombings on Iraq started.
- <sup>viii</sup> "In deutschem Interesse" was even the main SPD slogan for the 1986 Bundestag campaign, which Hans-Jochen Vogel led for his party.
- <sup>ix</sup> See Dan Diner, "Die 'nationale Frage' in der Friedensbewegung. Ursprünge und Tendenzen", in: Steinweg, p. 86-112.
- <sup>x</sup> Diner, cited by Revolutionäre Zellen, In Gefahr und höchster Not, bringt der Mittelweg den Tod. Krise, Krieg, Friedensbewegung. Diskussionspapier 1984, p. 24.
- <sup>xi</sup> Der Spiegel, May 1981, cited in Perdelwitz and Bremer, p. 29.
- <sup>xii</sup> Günter Gaus, cited in ibid., p. 319.
- <sup>xiii</sup> See Mohssen Massarrat, Kriegsgefahr und Friedensbewegung (Kassel, 1984), p. 11-19. A critical answer to this kind of economical anti-Americanism is provided in Revolutionäre Zellen, In Gefahr und höchster Not, p. 5ff.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Alfred Mechttersheimer, "'Modernisierung' gegen Sicherheit. Zur Stationierung amerikanischer Mittelstreckenraketen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", in Studiengruppe Militärpolitik, ed, Aufrüsten, um abzurüsten? Informationen zur Lage. Friedensforscher reagieren auf die internationale Krise (Reinbek, 1980), p. 62.
- <sup>xv</sup> Mechttersheimer, "Zum Gelcit", in: Franz M. Waldmann, Kronzeugen gegen die "Nachrüstung". Eine Dokumentation (Stuttgart, 1983).
- <sup>xvi</sup> See Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling, Die NATO. Anatomie eines Militärpaktes (Göttingen, 1987), esp. p. 97-107.
- <sup>xvii</sup> See Rudolf Steinke, ed, Exterminismus: Ende der Zivilisation? (Berlin, 1983).
- <sup>xviii</sup> See Josef Janning "Die neue Friedensbewegung 1980-1986", in: Janning, Legrand, and Zander, p. 40f.
- <sup>xix</sup> See Thomas Leif, "Die professionelle Bewegung - Zentrale Entscheidungsgremien und Meinungsführer", in: ibid., p. 54-63.
- <sup>xx</sup> Grassroots groups especially uttered this critique. See Fritz Maerz and S. Münster, "'Nur wer sich bewegt, spürt seine Fesseln'. Zu 20 Jahren sozialer Bewegung", in: Graswurzelrevolution 171-73 (Dec. 1992), p. 10f.
- <sup>xxi</sup> See for example Ulrike Adolph and Klaus Kunzweiler, "Schwerter zu Pflugscharen. Gewaltfreier Widerstand auf der Schwäbischen Alb", in: Graswurzelrevolution 64 (April 1982) p. 4ff.
- <sup>xxii</sup> See for this critique Martin Wiedemann, "Gewaltfreie sind nicht nur Methodenverkäufer. Reflexionen über die Blockade des Atomwaffenlager Großengstingen", in: Graswurzelrevolution 68 (Oct. 1982), p. 4f.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Arno Nym "Bleibt die Friedensbewegung im Bauch des Wals? Unzureichende Antworten - falsche Alternativen", in: Graswurzelrevolution 78 (Oct. 1983), p. 42. This also appeared in an extended version as a brochure: S. Münster, "Gegen und für die Friedensbewegung", Sonderdruck, Die freie Gesellschaft 9 (Hannover, Marburg, 1983).

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<sup>xxiv</sup> See for the mentioned contacts numerous articles in Graswurzelrevolution. See CCCO, eds, Getting Out. A Guide to Discharges From All Branches of the US. Military (March 1984).

<sup>xxv</sup> See for example “‘Absence Without Leave’ (Interview mit Janice Hill vom Military Counselling Network)”, in: Graswurzelrevolution 152 (Jan. 1991), p. 4.

<sup>xxvi</sup> See for example “wro”, “Heidelberger Historie. Dunkles Kapitel der US-Army in Süddeutschland”, in: Ruprecht (University of Heidelberg student paper), 66 (June 2000), p. 7.

<sup>xxvii</sup> See Rote Armee Fraktion, Erklärung vom 25. August 1995, Internet server of RAF texts. In addition: Gemeinsam gegen den Imperialismus. Ein neues Konzept. Summary of RAF Strategies of the Third Generation in the 1980s, Internet server of RAF texts.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Andreas Buro, “Transformationen, Bilanzen und Perspektiven der bundesrepublikanischen Friedensbewegung”, in: Ansgar Klein, Hans-Josef Legrand and Thomas Leif, eds, Neue Soziale Bewegungen. Impulse, Bilanzen und Perspektiven (Opladen, Wiesbaden, 1999), p. 226f.

<sup>xxix</sup> See Cleaves, p. 240f.

<sup>xxx</sup> See Gewaltfreie Aktion Göttingen, “Feldzüge für ein sauberes Deutschland. Politische Erklärung gewaltfreier Aktionsgruppen in der BRD zu Terrorismus und Repression am Beispiel der Mescalero-Affäre”, brochure supplement to Graswurzelrevolution 34/35 (Feb. 1978).

<sup>xxxi</sup> See Cleaves, p. 237ff.