

Hafenstrasse: how the Soviets soften up Germany with riots

by Hella Ralfs-Horeis

Barricades are heaped up right in the middle of a street that 25,000 automobiles travel every day. Masked figures string steel rails and NATO barbed-wire fences on the housetops. Shocktroops break into shops and schools, drag out furniture, and use it to reinforce the barricades. Lightpoles are sawed down, bus-stop shelters reduced to rubble, warehouses broken into. Diesel oil and the contents of trashcans are tipped over into the river, so that the containers can be used for the barricades. Police helicopters are fired upon with flare guns. Fires cast a ghastly light over the cityscape. All over the neighborhood, businesses are broken into, and alcohol and cigarettes are stolen. The police stand helplessly by. At the behest of the politicians, they cannot arrest anyone, but instead are to clear the streets the next day.

Are these scenes from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution or street battles between the Nazi Sturmabteilungen and Communists in the Weimar period of Germany?

No. This is the harsh daily reality of Hamburg's Hafenstrasse, one of the fortified outposts of Soviet-backed irregular warfare against the Federal Republic of Germany. In the middle of our community, a "lawless area" is developing, which can only be eliminated by military means.

How did it come about?

The free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg is ruled by a Social Democratic Senate, headed by Mayor Klaus von Dohnanyi. The city owns the construction company SAGA, which holds the titles to the occupied houses in Hafenstrasse. One city development plan had called for these houses, which are very old and lack all comforts, to be razed to the ground and replaced by new housing.

During the 1970s a lease was signed with the ASTA, the student self-government organization. Gradually more and more young people moved in, who replaced the tenants named in the original lease. In 1982 a "silent occupation" of the houses took place. Through several street battles with the police, the squatters beat down the Senate into signing a settlement with them in November 1983.

Pretty soon the "Hafenstrasse," as the occupied houses were called in the jargon of the leftist scene, had turned into a safehouse for all sorts of human flotsam and jetsam—runaway youths, drug addicts, criminals, and members of the terrorist RAF (Red Army Faction). Hence it was hardly surprising, when among a delegation of the Hafenstrasse

residents, which wanted to negotiate this past summer with the Senate, all of a sudden, up popped a certain Borgstede, a member of the support group of the Red Army Faction.

At demonstrations, whether against nuclear power or "peace" rallies, the Hafenstrasse squatters appear as a "Black Bloc," wearing black masks and black leather apparel. Out of this Black Bloc, violence against shop windows, businesses, and so forth is always committed. Starting in 1986, the Social Democratic Senate, reminding one of a pile of jello, tried to clear some dwellings. This led to violent demonstrations which ended up with the fire bombings of some stores.

At the beginning of 1987, the houses were again occupied, and immediately the anarchists started fortifying the buildings. Windows were walled up, steel doors were installed, barbed wire was strung along the rooftops, underground escape tunnels were built, and an illegal transmitter was installed. In short, the houses were armed for a bloody showdown with the police.

From these houses, crimes were constantly committed. Surrounding neighborhoods were invaded, autos were broken into, steel balls were shot from slings at workers at the Blohm & Voss shipyards next door to the houses, and so on. Then a man named Jan Philipp Reemtsma came on the scene, and offered the Senate to buy the houses and turn them over to the squatters. That plan foundered, but afterward, Reemtsma played an important role on the side of the squatters.

This November, it came to a head. The anarchists stepped up their provocations, gloating over the Nov. 2 armed ambush on the West Runway at Frankfurt airport, which left two policemen dead and many wounded, with a transparent: "Two cops are not enough."

Who controls Hafenstrasse

Hardly anyone seriously believes that the refuse of criminals, alcoholics, and drug addicts who live in the houses can set up fortifications to military specifications, or carry out well coordinated, targeted atrocities. Behind them stands a level of more or less open organizers, sympathizers, and directors.

First of all, Hamburg's ruling Social Democrats with their liberal, slipshod attitude played a decisive role in establishing the scofflaws in the houses.

But one suspects that the first cadre-like, tightly orga-

nized form of the Hafenstrasse came from members or sympathizers of the Red Army Faction (RAF). For manipulation purposes, drugs were inserted from the beginning, as was already generally known at the end of the 1970s. Then with Reemtsma, who wanted to see the Hafenstrasse as "state-free space," as financier, advocate, and sympathizer, another level came in. Jan Philipp Reemtsma happens to be the only heir of the huge cigarette company, Reemtsma, which he sold for a profit of about 300 million marks, which he has since tripled. This money, the media-shy millionaire prefers to invest in "alternative" projects.

Among his best known investments are the Arnold Schmidt Foundation and the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, whose advisers include Ernest Mandel, chairman of the Trotskyist Fourth International; Margaret Mitscherlich-Nielsen, the psychoanalyst and "mother" of the student and feminist movements; Alice Schwarzer, feminist, producer of "Emma," and according to some sources, one of the recruiters of the Moscow-linked Green Party leader Jutta Ditfurth (see *Report from Bonn*, page 50); and the Trotskyist Jakob Moneta.

As is well known, Karl-Heinz Roth, himself one of the leaders of the SDS (Socialist German Student Association), dedicates a great deal of his manpower to the institute. Roth was indicted on charges of having shot at a policeman; he

maintains relations to the terrorist Palestinian PFLP of Georges Habash and probably also to a faction of the Iranian mullahs.

Reemtsma also financed the revival of the magazine *Twen*, which has since been discontinued again. *Twen's* editor-in-chief, who died of AIDS, was very close to the West German Communist Party, the DKP.

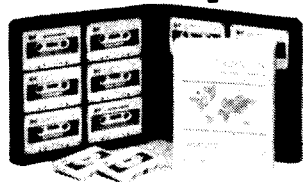
Reemtsma also bankrolled the magazine *Konkret*. According to sources close to the long-time editor of this leftist rag, Klaus Rainer Röhl, who was once married to the notorious terrorist Ulrike Meinhof, *Konkret* had been kept alive since the 1950s with money from East Germany. Röhl had sought to make himself financially independent from the East Germans, and was therefore shut out of the editorial board. His successor, Gremliza, today not only belongs among the Hafenstrasse sympathizers, but even volunteered, in the case of an attempted evacuation, to spend the night in one of the occupied houses.

It must also be mentioned that the Hamburg Green Alternative List was recruited out of the radical-Communist KB (Communist Alliance) and belongs among Hafenstrasse's biggest supporters.

And so, out of this miasma of the vacillating Senate, the Communist Party and Moscow-oriented journalists, a millionaire, and the Green Alternative List, a monstrosity has developed: an enclave in the middle of a major West German city where terrorists, political anarchists, and criminals do as they please.

Besides demonstrations, violence against property, and violence against persons there is another dimension: a fortified bridgehead in enemy territory for Moscow, which is publicly arming for confrontation. The pirate transmitter "Radio Hafenstrasse" whipped up listeners on Nov. 11: "Violence! We want our fun!" And later: "We call on everyone, who has not yet gotten his ass over here, once again. . . . Occupy the neighborhood, occupy the inner city, paralyze traffic, don't let business as usual go on here."

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