

# The assassination of Herrhausen: murder as a tool of (geo)politics

by Rüdiger Rumpf

Three weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall had put Germany into a mood of joyous celebration, a terrorist bombing shook the republic, and the effects of it are still felt today. It was already apparent immediately after the assassination of Alfred Herrhausen, that one of the most important personalities in Germany and in the world of international finance, had been murdered. The background of the assassination, and the effects it was to have, remained veiled for some time, or, at least, no one spoke about it in public. Politicians seemed unaffected by the killing of an important and close adviser of the Chancellor, and everyone expected that the process toward reunification of Germany would continue, although not as rapidly as it in fact happened.

Initially, the public was sold a package of pseudo-information about the assassination, based on the ostensible claim of the “Red Army Faction” (RAF), that they had carried out the bombing. The veneer seemed plausible: The RAF, after all, had a long history of being an underground guerrilla troop of enraged, misled desperadoes. Why should this gang of terrorists, which had fought the state for two decades, not also kill the head of the largest and most important bank in Germany? Had this gang, now in its “third generation,” not proven that it could successfully regenerate itself? The first generation was completely destroyed; the second was either in prison or its members had disappeared to parts unknown, but the “third generation” seemed to be a complete unknown, even to security authorities. Former Federal Attorney General Kurt Rebmann had admitted that, since the mid-1980s, there was no proof that any deed committed by an identified person, had been in connection with terrorist acts ascribed to the “RAF.”

## The fall of the Wall gives birth to monsters

The fact that the bloodless collapse of the hated East German SED dictatorship led to the revelation of some of the best-kept secrets of the West German elite, may be an irony of history. When, in the spring of 1990, the newly elected (and last) German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.) government began a series of arrests and extraditions of RAF terrorists long sought by West German authorities, it soon turned out that the people whose faces adorned the terrorist wanted posters hanging all over the walls of official buildings in West Germany (“Warning! Armed and Dangerous!!”), had not vis-



*Deutsche Bank Chairman Alfred Herrhausen. His assassination on Nov. 30, 1989 was a powerful blow—and a threat—to Chancellor Kohl.*

ited the G.D.R. on vacation: They had lived there as citizens of East Germany, in the grayness of everyday socialist life. After a bit of chatter in the media about whether the G.D.R. had been the real string-puller behind terrorism in the Federal Republic from the beginning, it turned out that Gen. Erich Mielke’s East German State Security (Stasi) bureaucracy had, in fact, now and then provided protection and helped the terrorists escape, but he could not be called the initiator or contracting party for the RAF first and second generations. In the trials against former RAF members, most of whom have now finished serving their sentences, the prosecuting attorney was unable to present any evidence of East German support for the terrorist group in the period before they had become “citizens of the G.D.R.”

The West German government had always denied having known that the RAF cadre were staying in East Germany. The authors of the book *RAF Phantom: What Do Politics and Business Need Terrorists For*<sup>1</sup> printed for the record, in the first edition (1992), the reply of the government to a question posed by Westdeutscher Rundfunk (West German Radio) on July 5, 1990: “The office of the Chancellor first learned that

1. *Das RAF—Wozu Politik und Wirtschaft Terroristen brauchen*, Gerhard Wisenewski, Wolfgang Landgrüber, and Ekkehard Sieker (Muenchen, Drömersche Verlaganstalt, Knauer, second printing, 1997).

‘RAF’ members were staying in the G.D.R. at the time of the arrests in June 1990.” The authors printed a dossier-entry of the Terrorism Department of the Federal Criminal Office (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA), dating back to 1986, demonstrating that the government’s claim could not be true. They showed (p. 383) that the West German government’s denial of having entered into an agreement with the G.D.R. was also not credible. The authors’ remark in this connection is significant: that the then-chief of the Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND), Klaus Kinkel (now Foreign Minister), personally attempted to dissuade a “Stern TV team” from broadcasting a report on government agreements between the Federal Republic of Germany and the G.D.R. on former RAF members. Kinkel is reported to have said, in the course of the attempt to prevent the broadcast, that such agreements would be “de jure tantamount to support for a terrorist association.”

Kinkel’s remark cannot be dismissed easily. *RAF Phantom* also cites remarks by George A. Carver, the former CIA mission chief (1976-79) at the U.S. Embassy in Bonn (p. 381), in an interview with *Tageszeitung* on March 27, 1992. Carver left no doubt that West German authorities had known about the former RAF members in the G.D.R. as early as the beginning of the 1980s. This point, said Carver, had been the subject of discussion between American and West German intelligence services on several occasions.

If ten of the most wanted terrorists, including Inge Viett, suspected of being among the leadership of the RAF for many years, and who was indeed among the first contact points for the East German Stasi in the West German and West Berlin terrorist scene, could be proven to have had nothing to do with the spectacular terrorist attacks of a “Red Army Faction” since 1984, then the question is: Who was the legendary “third generation” of the RAF, in reality?

In fact, just recently, on July 29, 1998, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, in an article entitled “The ‘RAF’ Consists of Three People,” reported on a study conducted by the Cologne Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz), on “The Dissolution of the RAF,” following the so-called declaration of the RAF in April 1998 that it was dissolving itself. The 38-page study reports that even some of the people highest on the wanted list since 1985 may not have even belonged to the RAF. This includes Andrea Klump, accused of involvement in the Herrhausen murder.

Who committed the assassinations, including of Herrhausen, if it was not this gang of “desperadoes,” as they were often portrayed by West German authorities? Was it possible that a terrorist organization could keep secret the identity of its membership, from 1985 to 1989, in a Federal Republic thoroughly saturated with electronic surveillance? How was it possible that this legendary terrorist gang, over the course of so many crimes, had never left a single strand of hair, not a drop of saliva, no identifiable piece of clothing, not a fragment of a fingerprint, no traces of an abandoned hideout, had successfully hid themselves from relatives, and left no

other traces of any kind, which might have been used to identify them? All of this is hardly possible.

Witnesses at the site of the Herrhausen assassination, according to authorities, reported having seen at least a dozen people around the site at that time, so that a considerable number of people were presumably involved in preparing and carrying out the bombing. But, according to their own statements, authorities do not know who these people may have been. That is all the more astonishing, since the entire area around the site of the assassination was under close surveillance by local police, the State Criminal Office, private security services, and also, on account of Herrhausen’s personal importance, officials of the Hessen Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz) and the BKA. While building superintendents and other witnesses noticed several joggers and other persons at the site, no one thought to be acting peculiar was observed by any of the official security agencies even a half-hour before the bomb exploded.

If the fact is also taken into account, that up to five persons had erected barricades at the site just before the assassination, on Nov. 30, and that they had chiseled a trench in the asphalt, into which they allegedly laid the cable with which the bomb was detonated, then the debility of official observational capabilities is indeed alarming.

One week following the assassination, Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble refused to provide the Interior Committee of the Bundestag (lower House of Parliament) with any information about the investigation, claiming that anything he said might interfere with the ongoing investigation. All he said, was that “the substance of the message, taking credit for the deed, contrasts with the severity and technical perfection of the hit.”

On Dec. 7, 1989, Richard Meier, the former president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, was questioned by the Bundestag Interior Committee. He was sufficiently informed to be able to testify that “a walking tour of the immediate vicinity of the site of the attack, one-half hour prior to Herrhausen’s drive through the site, would have revealed to a schooled eye that two young men, dressed in jogging outfits, and each with an earphone, i.e., in radio contact with each other, were attending to a bicycle” (p. 113). Meier drew sharp criticism against himself personally, when he testified that the advance vehicle of Herrhausen’s convoy had been “withdrawn” (p. 112).

### **For whom was Herrhausen a thorn in the side?**

If it seems plausible that Herrhausen was not killed by “deranged desperadoes” for “political-ideological reasons,” then the question is: Who had an interest in eliminating Herrhausen? An American expert on intelligence services, Col. Fletcher Prouty (ret.), made some interesting observations concerning this question. It was Prouty who, in the 1960s, provided the District Attorney of New Orleans, Jim Garrison, with the crucial evidence of a conspiracy in the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy. Prouty explained the back-

ground of this conspiracy to film director Oliver Stone, for his movie “JFK.” Prouty was depicted in the film as “Mr. X.”

Prouty sees a parallel between the assassinations of Kennedy and Herrhausen: “His death, at that time . . . and the astonishing circumstances of his death . . . resemble the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963,” Prouty said in an interview with the Italian daily *Unità* in 1992. “Some great power center wanted for some reason to get rid of the board spokesman of Deutsche Bank on that day and in that manner, in order to teach others a lesson. So there is a message in the way he was killed.”

Prouty said: “When you consider the great importance of events in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe, and especially in Germany . . . then the Herrhausen assassination is tremendously significant. We must not allow it to be swept under the rug.”

Prouty points out that the key to the assassination of Herrhausen was contained in the first 11 pages of a speech which Herrhausen had intended to deliver in New York on Dec. 4, 1989. In that speech, Herrhausen outlined a revolutionary proposal to found a bank for the development of Poland, modelled on the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, which had played a crucial role in the postwar economic reconstruction of Germany. This new bank for Poland was to be financed by funds from Western banks. Poland was to be enabled to participate in a Western-financed reconstruction, which was highly improbable at that point in time, since Poland was straining under an enormous foreign debt burden, and it could not have freed itself under its own power. The foundation for the kind of economic development which Herrhausen foresaw for Poland, would have been the renunciation by Western banks and countries of their claims to the payment of the outstanding debt: a monstrosity of a proposal—for the financiers. Clearly, this proposal went hand in hand with that which Lyndon LaRouche had made one year previously in Berlin. As Prouty emphasized, Herrhausen thus sided with a number of politicians and leading businessmen who had all been killed for the same reason, i.e., because they wanted to break the control of the “Condominium of Yalta” over the world. Among those Prouty included were John F. Kennedy, Aldo Moro, Enrico Mattei, and Olof Palme.

With this speech, Herrhausen would have put the prevailing management policy regarding the growing, catastrophic debt crisis into question. The policy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, all of the commercial banks with the exception of Deutsche Bank—a policy directly contrary to that of Herrhausen and LaRouche—was clearly not to develop the overindebted countries, Poland among them. Instead, by means of so-called structural and “financial reforms,” these countries were ostensibly to be enabled to service their unpayable debt—at the cost of the lives of their citizens. In view of such a commitment, it is not at all surprising that this policy has taken its toll everywhere, and these countries have experienced no development since the debt crisis began more than 30 years ago. The last year in which

there was a net capital transfer from the financially stronger industrial countries into the wrongly termed “developing countries,” was 1964.

Two months before his assassination, at the IMF annual meeting, Herrhausen expressed his conviction that the only chance to end the debt spiral consisted of at least a partial debt moratorium, not only for Poland, and provision of financial means for the economic development of indebted countries. Herrhausen drew the fire of the world of international finance against himself, with that proposal.

Biographer Dieter Balkhausen quotes Herrhausen, who had left Washington quickly following one such meeting, as saying that the air was “full of lead.” Herrhausen hinted on other occasions as well, that he saw himself in the role of a “reformer”—about whom Machiavelli had once warned, that such a person would have as adversaries those who profitted from the old system, while those who stood to profit from the new system would support him only half-heartedly. Today, the situation has not changed from what it was 300 years ago. By those who profitted from the old system, Herrhausen surely meant the international banking world, for which writing off their claims to payment of Third World debt could have threatened their existence.

Deutsche Bank was in a rather unique position in the world of international finance, because over many years, the bank had used its profits to write off its foreign liabilities almost completely. A serious public debate would have revealed the fact that the most highly indebted countries, in Ibero-America, for example, were in fact unable to pay their debts, and other banks, the competitors of Deutsche Bank, would have inevitably had to write off their bad debts as well. That would have led to collapsed credit ratings for those banks, below the level necessary for them to continue doing business internationally.

Herrhausen was not himself the inventor of this extraordinarily progressive policy. Deutsche Bank board member Werner Blessing was known, years before Herrhausen, for his public criticism of the debt-crisis recipes of the leading banks and financial institutions. Balkhausen notes that Herrhausen was impressed with Blessing’s attitude on this issue. Blessing, who was responsible for North America on the Deutsche Bank board, had announced in 1987 that Deutsche Bank would in the future intensify its operations in the U.S. market. That would have meant that Deutsche Bank would have become the second-largest bank in the United States, after Citicorp. Blessing died of a heart attack in 1987.

Herrhausen, just before his death, demonstrated that Deutsche Bank wanted to expand its operations worldwide. For the first time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, Deutsche Bank had bought an internationally leading investment house, Morgan Grenfell in London, for nearly DM 3 billion, and thus demonstrated in a way which seemed almost aggressive, that it would no longer content itself with being the leading bank in Germany.

One major problem, although it was not evident initially,

was Herrhausen's relatively isolated position, which derived from the relative strength of Deutsche Bank in comparison to other, including German, banks. Although all of the large German banks saw themselves compelled to write off bad debts in high-risk countries, and to do that in a timely fashion, and although they could thus have absorbed a possible debt moratorium without severe disruption, Herrhausen had no supporters in those banks. Even Blessing's ideas about reducing debts and forgiving interest payments had been denounced in banking circles as a "crazy idea." Herrhausen's most prominent opponent, Walter Seipp, speaker of the board of Commerzbank, not only disliked Herrhausen personally, but the *Frankfurter Rundschau* went so far as to claim that Seipp hated his banker colleague. The criticism from banking circles against Herrhausen was that he did not act in "solidarity" with them (cited in *RAF Phantom*, p. 162).

### Adviser to the Chancellor

Prior to his assassination, it was generally known that Herrhausen had significant influence with Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and that he had shaped the views of the Chancellor with respect to upcoming reunification, in the form Kohl presented those perspectives in his 10-point program to the German Parliament. The same influence was undoubtedly present in Kohl's views concerning an economic and monetary union, for which Kohl thought that a political union of European states was a precondition, and that this union was

still far in the future.

As recently published, secret government documents show, that on Nov. 27, 1989, Kohl described the difficulties with, and his reservations against a premature fixing of the time schedule for the economic and monetary union to an impatient French President François Mitterrand, who was also insisting on the need for the Four Powers to agree to a possible reunification of Germany. Kohl is reported to have insisted that the "large divergences in stability developments" would endanger the "actual achievement of the divergence goals in the first stage" of a monetary union. On Nov. 30, Herrhausen, who was clearly Kohl's most important adviser on European monetary union, was assassinated, while Mitterrand, on that very day—his letter arrived in Bonn on Dec. 1—demanded categorically, that "we make decisions in Strasbourg, which obligate us unmistakably to the path of economic and monetary union."

Kohl's capitulation did not take long: On Dec. 5, he retreated from his position and conceded to let the resolution pass at the upcoming meeting in Strasbourg planned for Dec. 9. There, Kohl agreed to the resolution to establish a governments' conference one year later to implement the monetary union—against the interests of Germany, as Kohl acknowledged in a discussion with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker three days later, according to the Dec. 18, 1989 *Der Spiegel* (*RAF Phantom*, p. 108). This is the background to the betrayal of German interests which Kohl has now made public.

While the criticism of the policy Herrhausen had articulated had not yet exploded at the time of his assassination, that changed radically in the spring of 1990. The sabotage launched by the British government under Thatcher against Bonn's efforts to achieve reunification, culminated in the "Fourth Reich" propaganda campaign against Germany invented in Britain, and the shameless attempt to equate Kohl's and Hitler's ambitions.

Compared with the tremendous destruction of the two world wars, "low-intensity warfare" operations, also known as terrorist warfare, cost relatively little. If one can successfully enforce one's will upon an adversary with little expenditure of force and money, then that manifests a far greater mastery of the tools of power, with which a political victory can be achieved. It is crucial in such operations that the form of the murder—of a more or less brutal execution of an adversary who plays a strategic role—contains a message, as Prouty correctly noted. The message is: From us, the perpetrators, you cannot protect yourself, because we commit our atrocities in public and we cannot be attacked. The astonishing thing is the degree to which the institutions of the Federal Republic saw it as their duty to cover up such blackmail.

The overlap in time of the largely confidential negotiations with allegedly friendly, or at least allied governments, and the publicly committed, nearly celebrated atrocity, leaves no doubt that Herrhausen's assassination was meant to deliver just such a message to the governing elite of the Federal Republic of Germany, by London- and Paris-centered forces.



## WAS DIANA MURDERED?

AN EIR VIDEO

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