



How it all began

Anti-Zionism, antisemitism, and the German New Left

By Dale Street

During the night of 8-9 November 1969 monuments in West Berlin commemorating victims of Nazi persecution, including one marking the destruction of a synagogue in the city's Schöneberg district, were vandalised.

"Shalom", "El Fatah" and "Napalm" were painted on the monuments, in the colours of the Palestinian national flag.

On 9 November itself, a member of the "Black Rats", Tupamaros West Berlin planted an incendiary device in the city's Jewish Community Centre, timed to ignite when the annual commemoration of Kristallnacht took place in the grounds of the centre later that day.

During Kristallnacht (9 November 1938) 8,000 Jewish businesses had been destroyed, at least 267 synagogues burnt down, 127 Jews killed, and almost all Jewish cemeteries in Germany vandalised.

In the evening of the same day members of the West Berlin Tupamaros provided the political rationale for their actions in a leaflet entitled 'Shalom + Napalm', distributed at a meeting being held in the city's Republican Club:

The American army was "on the brink of its final and total defeat" in Vietnam. The end of the war in Vietnam was "the beginning of the Vietnam war on all fronts." And the most decisive front of all was the Middle East, where "imperialism is employing all its forces to prevent its next decisive defeat."

European and US capital had "created a powerful military base in the Middle East" (i.e. Israel). Thousands of US military advisers with experience of Vietnam were already serving in the Israeli army. After the USA, West Germany was the biggest investor in Israel.

"Under the guilt-stricken cover of coming to terms with the fascist horrors inflicted on Jews," the leaflet continued, "it [West Germany] provides decisive assistance to the fascist horrors which Israel is inflicting on the Palestinian Arabs."

It was wrong to denounce the slogans on the "Jewish monuments" (sic) and the planting of the bomb in the community centre as "excesses by radical right-wingers." On the contrary, they were "a decisive link of international socialist solidarity."

The West German left suffered from a "theoretical paralysis" in its analysis of the Middle East. This was "the result of the German guilty conscience: 'we gassed Jews, so we must protect Jews from a new genocide'."

"True anti-fascism" had to replace this "helpless anti-fascism": "Clear and simple solidarity with the fighting Fedayeen ... remorselessly combating, by concrete actions, the close relationship between Zionist Israel and fascist West Germany."

Every commemoration of Kristallnacht in West Germany, claimed the leaflet, was a diversion from the 'real' Kristallnacht currently taking place in the Middle East:

"Kristallnacht of 1938 is today repeated on a daily basis by the Zionists in the occupied territories, in the refugee camps, and in Israeli prisons. The Jews who were driven out by fascism have become fascists themselves, working in collaboration with American capital to wipe out the Palestinian people."

Victory for "the Palestinian revolution", the leaflet con-



In 1969 the left-wing Tupamaros group planted an incendiary device in this West Berlin Jewish Community Centre

cluded, would not only be "a further defeat for world imperialism". It would also "begin the creation of a revolutionary liberation front in the western urban centres."

The Tupamaros West Berlin — who took their name from Uruguayan urban guerrillas — were a small group of around a dozen individuals, some of whom had initially risen to public prominence as members of Commune One.

Their leading figure, Dieter Kunzelmann, who died in May 2018, was antisemitic. His antisemitism was not complicated. He simply didn't like Jews. As Albert Fichter, who planted the bomb in the Jewish Community Centre, later recalled:

"Kunzelmann and Georg von Rauch [another Tupamaro] swore more and more about 'shitty Jews'. Kunzelmann always spoke about 'Jewish pigs' and wound up people against them. At that time he was like a classic antisemite. Georg spoke the same way."

The recently deceased Bommi Baumann (who had lived in Commune One with Kunzelmann) and Fichter's brother Tilman (who knew Kunzelmann personally) also confirmed in interviews conducted in later years that Kunzelmann was an antisemite:

"Kunzelmann was an antisemite. I'd known him since 1967. He was the only one [in Commune One] who constantly spoke dismissively about Jews. I thought it was a bizarre, black humour. It took us a while to realise that Kunzelmann was serious."

"It quickly became clear that Kunzelmann was an antisemite. If you analyse today what Kunzelmann was writing at that time, it was not left antisemitism, just antisemitism."

Kunzelmann believed that the German left had a "Jew hang-up" ("Judenknax"). He defined it in the first of his two 'Letters from Amman' (both written and posted in West Berlin), published in November 1969 in *Agit 883*, the most widely read magazine on the West Berlin left scene:

"... The Jew hang-up: 'We have gassed six million Jews. Today, the Jews are called Israelis. Whoever fights against fascism is for Israel.' It is as simple as that — but it is wrong

from beginning to end."

Kunzelmann called on his readers to ditch their "facile philo-Semitism" and replace it with "unambiguous solidarity with El Fatah". He also criticised Palestine solidarity activists in West Berlin for capitulating to "the supremacy of the Jew complex."

His concept of a "Jew hang-up" also found expression in the "Shalom + Napalm" leaflet ("... the German guilty conscience: 'we

gassed Jews' ...") and in his second "Letter from Amman" (published in April 1970): "From Amman I ask myself: When will you finally begin the organised struggle against the Holy Cow of Israel?"

When Albert Fichter admitted in 2005 to having planted the incendiary device in the Jewish Community Centre, he sought to partially excuse his actions on the grounds that it was "only" an incendiary device (not a "proper" bomb), and that he knew that the device would malfunction (as it did).

But Kunzelmann himself, recalled Fichter, had wanted the incendiary device to ignite:

"Dieter planned the entire action. People said that the most prominent Zionists from all over Europe would be meeting in the Jewish Community Centre. That was why a packet was to be left there. Dieter wanted to give a violent signal. In his plan, the bomb was to explode."

When I returned to the flat Kunzelmann and Georg were very disappointed that nothing had happened... But Kunzelmann conceded that it did not matter that it had not exploded. It was a 'psychobomb', a psychological bomb."

Kunzelmann saw the planting of an incendiary device in the Jewish Community Centre in West Berlin (pre-war Jewish population: 173,000; post-war Jewish population: 1,400) as an example for others to follow.

A tape-recorded message sent by the Tupamaros to Heinz Galinski, a Holocaust survivor and leader of West Berlin's Jewish community, proclaimed:

"The bomb in the Jewish Community Centre has gone off. Berlin is in upheaval. The left is stunned. Springer (a media mogul), the Berlin Parliament and the Galinskis want to sell us their Jew hang-up. But we're not getting involved in that business... In every place and at every time we must learn to strike, withdraw, and then strike again."

Although the voice on the tape recording was female, the reference to a "Jew hang-up" indicates that it was scripted by Kunzelmann himself.

Kunzelmann also condemned the failure of the Palestine solidarity movement to "learn from the people who placed

the bomb in the Jewish Community Centre”:

“The fact that the political fakers of the Palestine Committee have not used the chance provided by the bomb to start a campaign merely demonstrates that their relation to political work is purely one of theory, and further demonstrates the supremacy of the Jew complex in all their analysis.”

Kunzelmann’s own plans to manifest his “true anti-fascism” in other actions proved too much even for his own followers. According to Tupamaro Annekatrin Bruhn:

“Kunzelmann had put together a plan to target the Jewish kindergarten in the synagogue in Joachimsthaler Street. He gave his companion HB the job of checking out the vicinity. After an initial inspection the latter refused to take part in such an action. Children as victims — that was too much for him. After that the plan was dropped.”

But other individuals and organisations did take inspiration from Kunzelmann’s “true anti-fascism”.

In February 1970 seven elderly Jews — Holocaust survivors — died in an arson attack on a Jewish community centre in Munich which housed an old peoples’ home. The culprits were never caught, but the prime suspects included members of Action South Front, the Munich counterpart of the West Berlin Tupamaros.

Members of what later became the Revolutionary Cells (RC) provided logistical support for the seizure of Israeli hostages by the Palestinian organisation Black September in the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

Bommi Baumann provides details: “The weapons for the attack on the Olympic Games were stored in lockers in the Friedrichstrasse station in East Berlin. From there they were picked up by people from West Berlin, and that was how they ended up in Munich.”

The RC divided its activities into three categories: “Anti-imperialist actions. Actions against the subsidiaries and accomplices of Zionism in West Germany. Actions to assist the struggles of workers, youth and women.” In 1974 the second category of actions included:

“Bombing of the Korf engineering factory in Mannheim, 75% owned by Zionists. And bombing of the El-Al Offices in Frankfurt, because of the genocidal strategy of the Zionists towards Palestinians. ... Our attacks on Korf and the Israeli state travel agency are an expression of our solidarity with the Palestinian people in the struggle against Zionism.”

In 1976 Bose and another RC member collaborated with members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) to hijack a French passenger plane. After the plane had landed in Entebbe, Bose separated Israeli and Orthodox Jews from the other passengers.

(The hijackers insisted there was nothing antisemitic about this. A hostage later recalled: “They told us explicitly: ‘We’re not against the Jews, only against Israel.’ [But] the female German terrorist acted like a Nazi. She yelled and threatened to kill us all the time.”)

The same year members of the second-generation Red Army Fraction joined PFLP members in Nairobi in an unsuccessful attempt to blow up an El-Al passenger plane with SAM-7 ground-to-air missiles.

In 1977 the RC planned to kidnap the “Nazi hunter” Simon Wiesenthal in Vienna, and also kill Galinski and Ignaz Lipinski, chair of the Frankfurt Jewish community. Only problems with getaway cars frustrated the plan. As Klein explained:

“The two of them were to be shot... Galinski was normally heavily guarded in his office in the synagogue. But he either walked or cycled to the synagogue. He was to be shot on his way to work. The guy in Frankfurt in practically the same way. But first the RC had to steal a few cars.”

A footnote to such attacks and attempted attacks was provided in 1991: members of the third-generation Red Army Fraction provided logistical support for a bomb attack on a coach taking 31 Jewish emigres from the former Soviet Union to Budapest airport, from where they were to fly to Israel.

WEST GERMAN LEFT

In terms of their numbers and terrorist activities the West Berlin Tupamaros, the Revolutionary Cells and the successive versions of the Red Army Fraction were anything but representative of the broader West German left to which they claimed to belong.

But in their “analysis” of Israel, Zionism and the Israel-Palestine conflict, those organisations expressed, however crudely, ideas held by a much broader political current in the West German left in the late 1960s and subsequent years.

The starting point for that analysis was a particularly de-based version of “anti-imperialism”.

The radical left which emerged in West Germany in the 1960s — principally in the form of the Socialist German Student Federation (SDS) and the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (APO) — had little or no orientation to the working class.

For the SDS and the APO the motor of social change was

not class struggle but “Third World” anti-imperialist conflicts, with a particular focus on the struggle against American imperialism in Vietnam. Israel and the Israel-Palestine conflict were viewed through this prism. The Israel-Palestine conflict was the new Vietnam — not just metaphorically, but also politically.

In an open letter issued in agreement with the SDS Executive Committee just after the start of the Six Day War of 1967, Wolfgang Abendroth, one of the most prominent left-wing West German academics, explained the war’s significance in the bigger anti-imperialist scheme of things:

“Even in the current preventive war Israel must appear in the guise of the advance guard of American imperialist interests, not just to the feudal lords of monarchist Arab states but above all to the population of the essentially progressive republican military dictatorships.”

He continued, there could be no support for “the nationalist hysteria in the Arab states”. And, of course, there was a natural inclination to sympathise with the Israeli population. But all this was subordinate to larger anti-imperialist calculations:

“Looked at from a global perspective, a situation has unfortunately arisen in which the overall interests of the colonial revolution, the socialist states, and the revolutionary wing of the international labour movement in the capitalist states are more aligned with those of the Arab states (especially Egypt, Syria and Algeria, but not the monarchies) than with the interests of Israel.”

An article published in *Agit 883* in 1970 explained the political significance of the Israel-Palestine conflict in terms of the same big-picture “anti-imperialist” politics:

“The Palestinian liberation struggle is not the expression of the struggle of the Palestinian people against Jews as a religious community but part of the international class struggle in which the oppressed masses of the Third World confront their imperialist oppressors.”

So too did a motion tabled for the 1967 SDS congress (not voted on due to interventions by left-Zionist SDS leader Rudi Dutschke):

“The war between Israel and its Arab neighbours can be analysed only in the context of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab peoples against oppression by Anglo-American imperialism.

“The world’s richest and most profitable sources of oil are to be found in the Arabian peninsula. ... The SDS condemns Israeli aggression against the anti-imperialist forces in the Middle East.”

The same motion condemned Israel as an inherently reactionary colonialist enterprise:

“The Zionist colonisation of Palestine was and remains so today: the exiling and oppression by a privileged settler caste of the indigenous Arab population... The current annexationist plans of Zionist capitalism have removed any last doubts about the reactionary character of Israel.”

According to a leaflet condemning a visit to West Germany by Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban in February 1970, co-signed by the SDS, the General Union of Palestinian Students, the Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad, and various associations of Arab, Iranian and Afghan students:

“The visit by Abba Eban, who arrives in West Germany as the representative of a racist state, must become a demonstration and a protest against the Zionist state of Israel, an economically and politically parasitic state, and against its imperialist function in the Middle East.

“The Palestinian struggle is an integral part of the struggle of all oppressed peoples of the Third World against imperialism. ... Down with the chauvinist and racist state structure of Israel!”

In his second ‘Letter from Amman’, Kunzelmann warned of the consequences of a failure to act against Zionist expansionism:

“If we do not now begin the organised struggle against imperialism and Zionism, we will stare in disbelief at the carpet-bombing of Amman, Damascus, Cairo or Beirut ... and at the Zionists marching across more than just the Jordan River. All Palestine groups must work closely with all Palestinians and Arabs to form a solid front against the common enemy.”

Articles in *Konkret*, another magazine widely read on the West German left, likewise defined Israel as a colonial enterprise and imperialist outpost.

“A Jewish state was created in Arab Palestine,” explained an article published in 1968, in order to facilitate “the consolidation of European colonialism in the Middle East.”

And according to a lengthy statement issued by the first-generation Red Army Fraction after the kidnapping and killing of Israeli athletes in Munich in 1972, the perpetrators — Black September — were fighting not just Israel but also:

“Against that ruling system which is simultaneously the final historical system of class rule and also the most blood-

thirsty and most vicious system which has ever existed: against imperialism, which in its nature and in its tendency is thoroughly fascist.”

In line with the Soviet Communist Party’s adoption of anti-Israel (and antisemitic) politics after the Six Day War, the newspaper of the German Communist Party proclaimed:

“In the Middle East the world is divided into two fronts. There are the Arab peoples, who are supported by the progressive forces of the world as they represent progress; and opposite them is the Zionist milieu, the Jewish bourgeoisie and monopolies in and outside of Israel, who are supported by the entire capitalist world.”

The influence of Stalinism on the West German anti-authoritarian left should not be underestimated. The network of Republican Clubs which existed across West Germany was nominally a “debating forum” for the left. In fact, reports on their activities were sent directly to the Politburo of the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED) and discussed at its meetings. The money for founding the West Berlin Republican Club came from the foreign espionage section of the Stasi.

The APO bulletin *Extra Blatt* was likewise edited by a Stasi agent. And although *Konkret* was no longer directly funded by the SED after 1964, Stasi collaborators continued to figure prominently among its editors and contributors in the following years.

NEW VIETNAM

Throughout the late 1960s the German left had seen Vietnam as the decisive anti-imperialist struggle. But from 1967 onwards the Israel-Palestine conflict began to replace the role previously played by Vietnam.

“The revolutionary workers and peasants in the Arab states are ready to transform the Middle East into a second Vietnam,” declared a Heidelberg SDS leaflet on the eve of the Six Day War.

Following the war *Konkret* carried articles likening Israel’s military tactics to those of the US in Vietnam (‘Accused: Israel’s Napalm War’) and informed its readers that “El Fatah is the name of the ‘Arab Vietcong’.”

While *Konkret* uncritically quoted Yasser Arafat (“We are a national liberation movement, conducting the same struggle as the partisans in Vietnam”), slogans on left-wing demonstrations included “Not a penny, not a man, for a second Vietnam” and the American slogan “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, El Fatah will win”.

The increasing substitution of Israel-Palestine for Vietnam in the late 1960s was described by Bommi Baumann in his autobiography-cum-memoir, *How It All Began*:

“The problem of Palestine was introduced [into political arguments]. Vietnam was no longer the ideological superstructure, it was Palestine... The ‘Shalom + Napalm’ leaflet explained the problems of Palestine from a left perspective.

“According to this: The new strategy of imperialism ran through Palestine; Vietnam was finished; the war was quasi over; Vietnam could not be an issue forever; now it was time to get involved in the issue of Palestine; and that issue was much closer to us [because of the issue of oil] than Vietnam.”

Kunzelmann himself returned to the theme of Vietnam in his ‘Letters from Amman’:

“But one thing is clear: For West Germany and Europe Palestine is what Vietnam is for the Yanks. Left-wingers have not yet understood that... Let us use the experiences of a radical-democratic Vietnam campaign and start a socialist campaign about Palestine.

“The tape recording sent to Galinski made the same equation of Vietnam/America and Palestine/West Germany: ‘Vietnam is not here. Vietnam is in America. But now hear this: Palestine is here. We are Fedayeen. This afternoon we battle for the revolutionary Palestinian Liberation Front El Fatah.’”

Cast in the role of the foremost fighters in the new frontline against world imperialism, “revolutionary” El Fatah, the PFLP, and other Palestinian organisations received the adulation formerly reserved for the Vietcong.

At the invitation and expense of El Fatah and the PFLP, a dozen leading members of the SDS visited El Fatah training camps in Jordan in July of 1969. In October five members of the future West Berlin Tupamaros received military training from El Fatah, as did twenty members of the first-generation Red Army Fraction the following year.

Kunzelmann, who was one of the five future Tupamaros to have travelled to Jordan in October, was bedazzled by his experiences:

“Here for the first time I have understood what it means to say that people change in a revolutionary manner in the ‘long popular liberation struggle’. It is this revolutionary transformation of every individual which prevents power structures being re-established after the armed uprising.”

To be a Palestinian was, existentially, to be anti-imperialist. A leaflet distributed in December 1969 by Commando Red



In the late 60s the Palestinian conflict replaced Vietnam as the key anti-imperialist struggle for the German left.

Christmas (the West Berlin Tupamaros under another name) explained:

"The history of the Holy Family [Mary, Joseph, Jesus] is the history of the struggle of the Palestinians against imperialism. Yesterday it was the Romans, the Crusaders, the caliphs and the Ottomans. Then it was the English. Now it is the Zionists and the Yanks.

"For us, support for the liberation struggle in the Third World means: Destroying Zionism in your own country. Revolutionary Jews are fighting on our side. Transform this corrupt Christmas festival into a celebration of solidarity with El Fatah."

("Destroying Zionism in your own country" needs to be read in the context of the incendiary device planted in the Jewish Community Centre the previous month.)

When Israeli athletes were kidnapped and killed (partly by their captors, and partly in a botched police operation) in Munich in 1972, the first-generation Red Army Faction were positively ecstatic about the perpetrators:

"The action of Black September has exposed the nature of imperialist rule and anti-imperialist struggle like no other revolutionary action in West Germany or West Berlin to date. It was simultaneously anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and internationalist. ... [It] will never be eradicated from the memory of the anti-imperialist struggle."

Fantastic political illusions about the impact of a victorious "Palestinian revolution" heightened the level of adulation. In early 1970 an article in *Agit 883* explained:

"If El Fatah can lead this struggle to a socialist conclusion and rally behind itself the most oppressed classes, then there is the possibility of genuine emancipation of all the oppressed masses of the Near East.

"The Palestinian revolution is directed not just against the imperialist bulwark, the Zionist state of Israel, but also has an impact on the consciousness of the Arab masses. It leads to their release from reactionary nationalist ideas, and prepares the way for a pan-Arab socialist-emancipatory revolution."

According to another *Agit 883* article published in early 1970 El Fatah wanted to "drive out Zionism" as the first stage of a socialist revolution:

"El Fatah wants to drive out Zionism and break the back of Jewish racism, in order to set about the socialist revolution together with Jews, Christians and Arabs. It decisively distinguishes itself from the petty-bourgeois chauvinist goals of small splinter groups.

"They do not want to drive 'the Jews' into the sea, as Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban claims. That is why El Fatah also does not struggle against 'the Jew' and does not take part in aeroplane bombings."

Israel was a no-go area for the anti-imperialists of the SDS and APO. When one of the SDS leaders who had visited El Fatah training camps in 1969 was asked by a journalist if they

would also be visiting Israel, he replied: "'Why would we want to go to Israel? We'll go there when it has become socialist."

ISRAEL FASCIST

Israel was far worse than "just" a colonial enterprise and outpost of imperialism: It was fascist.

According to Kunzelmann "The Zionists" committed Kristallnacht on a daily basis. "The Jews" had become fascists. Israel was inflicting "fascist horrors" on Palestinians. "A new fascist genocide" was being inflicted by Israel. Zionism was "a fascist ideology". And El Fatah was fighting against "the Third Reich of Yesterday and Today."

Kunzelmann was not alone in expressing this political "analysis". According to a leaflet distributed by Hamburg University's Students Union on the occasion of a meeting addressed by Asher Ben-Natan, Israel's first ambassador to West Germany, in June of 1969:

"He (Ben-Natan) knows that the best friends of Israel today are those who yesterday built the concentration camps and advocated the Final Solution. The victors in the Blitzkrieg of 1940 can identify without any difficulty with the victors in the Blitzkrieg of 1967.

"The members of the master race of the Third Reich view with satisfaction the racist policies of the Dayan-Meir clique directed against Arab 'subhumans'."

Later the same year articles in *Konkret* explained that "those who were once persecuted have themselves become the persecutors, the tortured have become the torturers", repeated an albeit unconvincing claim by an unnamed "Arab intellectual" that there were camps similar to concentration camps in the Occupied Territories:

"Some of these camps," an Arab intellectual told me, "are like concentration camps. If you want to get out, you need a pass. And if you want to get back in, you need a pass again."

In February of 1970, on the eve of a visit to West Germany by the Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, the Munich Palestine Committee declared its opposition to "the aggressive policies of national-socialist Israel. We are for a Popular Republic of Palestine in which Jews and Arabs live together with equal rights."

Exponents of such politics gave Palestinian activists in Germany such as Issam Sartawi (founder of the Action Organisation for the Liberation of Palestine) a sympathetic hearing for their comments about Abba Eban's visit:

"We regard West Germany as enemy territory. ... West Germany carries a large part of the collective guilt with regard to the Palestinian people. The Germans have paid 3.5 billion Mark to Israel as reparations, a significant factor in the development of the Israeli war machine.

"In this manner West Germany can boast of having committed two genocides in one generation. The genocide of the Jews, and the genocide — by the surviving Jews — of the Arabs."

The first-generation Red Army Faction tract on the killing of the Israeli team at the 1972 Olympics in Munich was almost obsessive about the equating of Israel with Nazi Germany.

It referred to "Israel's Nazi fascism" and to "Moshe Dayan fascism". Dayan himself, the Israeli Defence Minister in the Six Day War, was "this Himmler of Israel". Israeli military operations were a "war of extermination". And Israel had "used its athletes as the Nazis used the Jews — as fuel to be burned."

In an unrivalled display of quack-Marxist pseudo-erudition the document argued that Israel, not Nazi Germany, constituted "real" fascism. Nazi Germany had been "only the political and military anticipation of the imperialist system of multinational concerns." German capitalists had made the mistake of allying with "the decaying petty bourgeoisie" and the "ideologically backward Nazi Party". They should have built up their own economic power. Instead, they began the Second World War.

Real fascism, on the other hand was a product of advanced capitalism and imperialism. The latter was "in its nature and in its tendency thoroughly fascist". And because the existence and essence of Israel was inseparable from its imperialist role, it was Israel, not Nazi Germany, which represented true fascism.

In the first half of the 1970s articles by the East German writer Klaus Polkehn reinforced the equating of Zionism and Israel with fascism by sections of the West German left. Ten years before Lenni Brenner and 40 years before Ken Livingstone, he raised the accusation of Nazi-Zionist collaboration:

"There was broad agreement between the Zionist and fascist basic ideological positions. National-socialists and Zionists alike championed racist theories. Both were chauvinist and wanted 'racial exclusivity'. ...

"From the first days of Nazi rule in Germany the Zionists had at their disposal a direct line to the fascist repressive ap-

paratus. From the first contacts there developed a lively cooperation between the Zionist leadership and the terror organisations of the Nazi Reich. ...

"If only a small proportion of the Jews of Europe could be saved, not the least of the reasons for this was the negative attitude of the Zionists.

"For the sake of accuracy it should not be forgotten that those Jews who survived the Nazi terror owed their rescue above all to the anti-Hitler alliance, especially the soldiers of the Soviet army, who made indescribable sacrifices to destroy the Nazi dictatorship."

By the mid-1970s the Revolutionary Cells had emerged not just as the new armed wing of "anti-Zionist anti-fascism" but also as a new mouthpiece for this "analysis":

"[Since 1972] the entire West German left has failed to utter even a word of condemnation about the genocide of the Palestinians. The terrible crimes committed by German fascism against Jews should not blind us to campaign of elimination being conducted by the Zionists in Palestine.

"The Zionists have drawn disastrous lessons from their persecution. They have learnt well, and today they persecute, oppress, drive out and exploit Palestinians and Arabs just as they themselves were once persecuted."

ANTI-ZIONISM

Such outpourings in the late 1960s and early 1970s were reflected in the slogans and protests directed at Israeli politics and politicians in those years: "Zionism is Fascism", "Only when bombs have exploded in 50 supermarkets in Israel will there be peace there", "Beat the Zionists Dead — Make the East Red!" and "It's a pity you weren't gassed!"

These slogans and abuse were all part of organised campaigns to prevent meetings with Israeli speakers defending Israeli politics from going ahead, mainly meetings organised by student Jewish societies at universities, but also including a meeting in the West Berlin Republican Club.

Such outpourings also provided the basis for even more degenerate forms of "anti-Zionism" in later years.

The Red Press dismissed Zionism as "the ideology of reactionary Jewish capitalists". A leaflet by West Berlin Maoists condemned "world Zionism". The Communist League called for a struggle against "international Zionism" and "the destruction of the Zionist state" (as "the only way to resolve the conflict in the Middle East").

Zionism was "vehemently opposed to peaceful coexistence between peoples." (Freiburg Middle East Group). Zionism was "the imperialist answer to the 'Jewish Question'"; it was "not only the irreconcilable and unreformable enemy of the Palestinians. It is also our enemy. It is the enemy of all people." (Hamburg Middle East Group).

Other organisations and campaigns described Israel as "the Garden of Evil" and "a single continuum of crimes against humanity". The "monstrosity of Zionist aggression" was unconstrained by "reason and humanity". Jews were "a supposed people" which "had never existed". And "the domination of the world media by Zionist propaganda" made criticism of Israel impossible.

In exculpating itself of allegations of antisemitism and claiming victimhood status — victims of that "domination of the world media by Zionist propaganda" and what the Revolutionary Cells called "the gigantic propaganda machine which Israel has at its disposal here" — "anti-Zionism" was nothing if not inventive.

And on the rare occasions it condemned antisemitic actions outright, it did so in a manner which combined condemnation of the action with endorsement of the politics which underpinned it: the tactic was problematic, but not the underlying politics.

According to the chair of the West Berlin Republican Club, speaking at a press conference after the discovery of the incendiary device in the Jewish Community Centre, bombs were "not a suitable means" to "draw attention to the fascist developments in Israel." What the West German left needed, he concluded, was the elaboration of "a consistent anti-imperialist strategy, as the existence of the Zionist state of Israel is based on the non-existence of the Palestinian people."

A *Republican Club Bulletin* published a week later repeated the same argument. "Fighting fascist tendencies in Israel" and the staging of a Kristallnacht commemoration event — "whatever you might think of such ceremonies" — did not justify the attempted arson.

The bulletin also complained about how the incident was being used by the media to suggest that left-wing "anti-Zionism" was no different from right-wing antisemitism:

"[For the media] it is a matter of proving that Red equals Brown. We will have to get used to that, to every discussion about the question of Palestine being used by the forces of reaction in this manner.

Whoever placed the bomb in the Jewish community centre

has helped this strategy of the counter-revolution. For the left, this can only be an occasion to work out a consistently anti-imperialist strategy for the Middle East."

A statement from the West Berlin German-Israeli Study Group, issued at the same time and printed in the Berlin *Extra Dienst*, went a step further, suggesting that the events of 9 November were positively welcomed by "the forces of reaction":

"They [the forces of reaction], along with the official representatives of the Israeli politics of occupation (which certainly also includes the Jewish Community Centre), welcome this staged ["inszeniert"] action as a means to disseminate the calculated thesis of the identity of fascism and socialism among the public."

In his autobiography — published several years before Albert Fichter's confession — Kunzelmann took this argument to its logical conclusion. He suggested that it might have been an "inside job":

"Today I still ask myself whether the action was staged by the secret services or whether the incendiary device could have been left by sympathisers of the Tupamaros West Berlin who had lost the plot."

When seven Holocaust survivors were killed in an arson attack on a Jewish community centre and old people's home in Munich three months later, the response from the 'anti-Zionist' left was even worse.

Kunzelmann blamed Zionists for the murders. In the Middle East Zionists were engaged in "genocide and the colonisation of the occupied territories." They needed "another five or six million immigrants". Hence the rationale for the arson attack in Munich:

"This is where you find the motive for the Zionist massacre in the Munich old folk's home. (Anyone who does not consider Zionists capable of such deeds should study the Zionist killer organisation Irgun and Menachim Begin.)

"If seven innocent pensioners burn to death, then other Jews will emigrate to escape from the phantom of the emergence of fascism of a Hitlerian variety. Every immigrant to Israel can be compared to a French settler in Algeria, and potentially to a GI in Vietnam."

An article in *Kurbiskern*, another magazine widely read on the left, came close to suggesting that a legitimate target had been selected by the perpetrators. According to the article, published shortly after the attack, neighbours of the centre had the impression that an illegal arms trade was being run on the premises, involving Jewish student activist David Wasserstein:

"Have the police questioned David Wasserstein in relation to this? Informed sources describe him as the leader of the Moriya Group, a right-Zionist organisation. Didn't this have a base, if not its secret headquarters, in that part of the building which was burnt down?"

"What does the police have to say about the fact that David Wasserstein is both leader of the Moriya (in the underground) and chair of Jewish student organisations in Bavaria (for the public)."

A statement left at the Munich offices of the German Press Agency and bearing the symbol of the Munich Tupamaros argued that the arson attack was an 'inside job' designed to provide a pretext to attack the left:

"There will be an attempt made to blame us for the fire in the old folk's home. Take this in: WE DO NOT TARGET INNOCENT PEOPLE. This new Reichstag fire in the old folk's home can only have been the work of people with an interest in opening a witch-hunt against the enemies of US-Zionist imperialism."

A week later an article in *Agit 883* distinguished "fascist terrorist attacks" from the activities of "revolutionary organisations which find themselves in a state of war." The former showed contempt for human life, they were blamed on the left, and their perpetrators could never be found. Munich was an example of that:

"As is the case in the Farmers Bank of Milan and the Jewish old folk's home, they ["the crimes of the fascist bombers"] are staged in order to be blamed on their most decisive opponents, the revolutionary forces.

State organs need such pretexts to combat revolutionary organisation and ban it whenever possible. The fire in the old folk's home in Munich is a prime example of this theory."

The same issue of the magazine carried a statement from the SDS and other organisations condemning the attack on the Jewish old folk's home: "Such antisemitic actions are not a political means in the struggle against Zionism." The signatories were "against Zionism and its political expression, Israel, not against Jews."

Such a distinction between Zionists and Jews, if it meant anything even for the statement's signatories, was certainly lost on the editors of *Agit 883*. Just five pages later an article referred to the "Jewish-Zionist community centre" in West Berlin.



Dieter Kunzelmann in various disguises

It was also lost on the authors of a statement by the Revolutionary Cells published in the left-wing magazine *Pflasterstrand* after Hans-Joachim Klein's exposure of their plans to murder Galinski and Lipinski:

"You go on about Hans-Joachim Klein's horror story instead of thinking through the role which Galinski plays for the crimes of Zionism and the cruelties of the imperialist army of Israel, and instead of thinking through this character's function in propaganda and material support. Galinski is anything but 'a Jewish community chairperson'."

In fact, an argument already in common usage by the early 1970s, accusations of antisemitism were instrumentalised by Zionists and the right-wing media to misrepresent their political opponents and stifle criticism.

ZIONISTS

According to the leaflet distributed at Hamburg University on the occasion of Israeli Ambassador Ben-Natan's visit in June of 1969:

"Asher Ben-Natan has an excellent understanding of how to use — in the interests of the ruling class of Israel which he represents in Bonn — this antisemitism which has been twisted into something 'positive'."

According to the introduction to an *Agit 883* article entitled "What is Antisemitism?" published in November 1969, which had also been the text of a speech in the West Berlin Republican Club the previous week:

"The incident in the Jewish Community Centre is being used by Springer and his consorts to step up the lies they spread about the socialist movement. ... [They] claim that the socialist movement is not socialist at all but antisemitic and left-fascist.

"It is no surprise that they cannot tell the difference between antisemitism and anti-Zionism. After all, they were all involved directly or indirectly in the crime of the extermination of the Jews."

And according to Kunzelmann's 'Second Letter from Amman':

"The Jewish diaspora in the entire world, insofar as it is Zionist (and where is it not Zionist?), is beating the big drum. 'Anti-Zionism is antisemitism' — that's the cunningly sly lie of the Galinskis and Springer's hangers-on. Anyone who accepts this statement represents the imperialist point of view and thereby becomes an enemy for every left-winger."

The "real" antisemites, continued the same line of argument, were the Zionists themselves and their supporters, who had previously carried out the Holocaust. The 'What is Antisemitism?' article published in *Agit 883* explained:

"Today, the butchers of the Jewish people [in Nazi Germany] and their helpers' helpers have adopted a philosemitic ideology and have become the principal basis of support for aggressive Zionism in Israel.

"A characteristic of Zionism is its adoption of petty-bourgeois antisemitism. The Zionists hate nothing more than the Jewish intellectual who lives abroad, who does not sleep on a camp bed at night and does not spend the day with a machine-gun in his hand, ploughing fields and chasing out Arabs."

Real or imaginary antisemitism was exploited by Zionism in order to cover up its own antisemitism and to win the support of world public opinion. As another article in *Agit 883* explained:

"Militant Zionists such as Ben Gurion were able to drive the Palestinians out of their country only in the shadow of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis. While the entire world was filled with disgust by [the Nazi policies], the Zionists in Palestine developed their own petty-bourgeois and chauvinist racism.

"Ben Gurion and his party comrades agreed with the antisemites in Europe that the fundamental evil of Jewry was its intellectualisation. ... Because of the crimes of the Nazi regime, the entire world was too easily prepared to glorify the Zionists and their record of construction."

By contrast, the first-generation Red Army Fraction took a very different attitude towards antisemitism, even in its most genocidal form. Echoing an argument from the last decades of the nineteenth century, it claimed that antisemitism was a form of anti-capitalism:

"Auschwitz means that six million Jews were murdered and dumped on Europe's rubbish tip — as what they were presented as: money Jews. This antisemitism was anti-capitalist in nature. With the extermination of six million Jews the longing of Germans for freedom from money and exploitation was also murdered."

The idea that antisemitism was a form of anti-capitalism had been denounced by the German socialist August Bebel in the 1890s as "the socialism of fools". But in the years following 1967 that "socialism of fools" underwent a sudden and rapid resurgence in West Germany.

As early as July of 1969 Holocaust survivor Jean Amery recognised the real nature of this 'anti-Zionism'. In an article entitled 'The Respectable Antisemitism', published in the politically mainstream *Die Zeit* newspaper, he wrote:

"The classic phenomenon of antisemitism is taking on a contemporary form. The new concepts emerged right after the Six Day War and have gradually made headway: ... anti-Israelism, anti-Zionism, both in purest harmony with the antisemitism of times past.

"But what is new is: this antisemitism which presents itself as no more than anti-Israelism is located on the left. That used to be the socialism of fools. Now it is becoming an integral part of socialism per se. And every socialist is therefore voluntarily making a fool of himself.

"The antisemitism contained in anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism, like the storm in a cloud, is respectable again."

Nearly half a century has passed since Amery identified the essence of the 'anti-Zionism' which burst into the West German left politics in the late 1960s. But the main themes of that 'anti-Zionism' continue to define the essence of a brand of contemporary 'anti-Zionism':

Israel as an imperialist outpost and bridgehead; Israel as a racist, fascist state; Zionism as a racist, fascist ideology; Hebrew-Jews as a settler-caste; the genocide of the Palestinians; Zionist-Nazi collaboration; Zionist false-flag operations; Holocaust commemorations as a political diversion; Zionism as a form of antisemitism; no-platforming pro-Israel speakers; Zionist domination of the media; and the weaponisation of allegations of antisemitism.

And virtually all of these themes were to be found in the rambling writings of an antisemite, Dieter Kunzelmann, for whom the ultimate expression of anti-imperialist struggle was an arson attack on a Jewish community centre timed to coincide with a commemoration marking Kristallnacht.

But, as the Revolutionary Cells explained in a statement issued nine years later, responsibility for any 'collateral damage' arising from such 'anti-Zionist' activities supposedly lay solely with Zionists and the Israeli state themselves:

"It is a principle of these [Zionist] institutions to locate Jewish cultural and social agencies (old folk's homes, nurseries, etc.) in their immediate vicinity, or to simply move into an ordinary accommodation block full of families.

"This is to ensure that in the event of any attacks on these institutions as many people as possible are victims, so that the attacks can then be denounced as 'antisemitic incidents' in line with a longstanding and tried-and-tested Zionist strategy.

"This kind of taking refuge behind innocent people who are misused as human shields, and who generally do not even know who has settled in their midst, is one of the most vile and most contemptible 'specialities' of Zionism.

"That does not mean that we consider it wrong to carry out attacks on these kind of Zionist institutions. It only means that we must be clear about one thing:

"The Israeli state and its representatives here use all means at their disposal (if need be: the dead), and no price is too high for them in spreading their propaganda slogans: that the anti-Zionist struggle is only another bloody link in the chain of the persecution of Jews."