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# You Are Still Your Parents' Children: The New German Left and Everyday Anti-Semitism & Why I am Leaving

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## You Are Still Your Parent's Children

The New German Left and Everyday Anti-Semitism

My more or less dear left-wing friends!<sup>1</sup>

I'm writing this letter because I no longer have any desire to talk to you. I just want to get a few things off my chest and on the record. It won't make anything better, but it will make some things clearer. And that is my sole concern.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in a so-called countercultural pub. On the walls-posters about Chile, El Salvador, Iran; on the tables-an appeal for solidarity with the imprisoned IRA comrades; in the bathroom-sayings carved in the wall, among others: "We are the people your parents warned you about!" Great, I thought, they are proud of their parents' mistakes!

You think you are so much different from your parents. You have, so it seems, achieved something no generation before you has ever accomplished: you have severed yourself completely from the tree from which you fell. A few days ago, I read an interview with some progressive punk-rocker types in the *taz*, Berlin's left-wing daily newspaper. In answer to the question, "What do you guys think about fascism?" one of these twentysomethings replied: "I didn't stick no Jew in the KZ; I didn't shoot no Poles; I really don't got nothing to do with that, that was my father or my grandfather. I don't blame my grandmother or my ancestors for the Thirty Years' War, neither...?" Another one of the punk rockers was quick to bridge past and present by saying: "Back then they gassed the Jews; today people are executed in Stammheim?"<sup>2</sup>

Not everything that falls from the lips of "counterculturals" sounds so trite and stupid. But these statements set precisely those parameters that constrict the growth of your own historical consciousness: You "really have nothing to do" with your history. So the thought of what your parents did to the Jews comes to mind, if at all, only when you complain about how badly some social groups are being treated today. Women, students, or gays become the "Jews of today"; you are as oblivious to the audacity of such comparisons as you are to the fact that, in constructing them, you place yourselves in the immediate proximity of right-wing politicians like Strauß, Stoiber, and Kohl, who consider it appropriate to equate the anti-Strauß campaign with the Jew-baiting of *Der Stürmer*: You, too, abuse millions of dead for your everyday political agendas. You have lost all your principles, if you ever had any.

I could give you credit for some mitigating circumstances: your parents have abandoned you. What little you do know about your own history you have picked up by chance. You can

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<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of 1981 the young Jewish journalist Henryk Broder left Germany-his adopted country. Yet before he departed for Israel, he wrote an open letter to his "left-wing friends." This was his way of settling the account with an anti-Zionist sentiment that masks ancient anti-Semitic instincts with progressive slogans-it is a document of outrage and of resignation. (*Spiegel* editor's note.)

<sup>2</sup> When the RAF member Ulrike Meinhof was found dead in her cell in Stammheim prison near Stuttgart, the death was officially reported as "suicide," but leftist circles generally assumed she had been executed.

distance yourselves from mom and dad as far as you wish, and speak as disparagingly of your procreators as you will-but you are still your parents' children. It is only in your conscious behavior, the part you can control, that you have set yourselves apart from your parents the more pronounced the differentiation, the more contrived.

The reason for my complaint is that you refuse to recognize the coherence of cause and effect when it comes to yourselves, and you act as though you were a new breed of people: unburdened by the smell of the kitchens from which you come, born into a vacuum that didn't begin to fill until you appeared. That you absorbed more in your cradle than just the sound of a baby's rattle, that you have been fed not only on milk porridge but also on your mothers' and fathers' prejudice and predilection, on their way of thinking and feeling his is a thought you haven't let concern you to this day.

The "pathologically clear conscience" of your parents-people who knew nothing and, if anything, only went along with it to prevent worse from happening: that pathologically clear conscience is your political seed money. With Auschwitz at your backs, but neither in your heads nor hearts, today you can afford to debate about whether refugees fleeing Vietnam are "real" or simply "economic refugees" who don't want to participate in the construction of socialism, and you count the dollar notes and gold bars these people bring along those fortunate enough to survive their "flight"? These debates took place here once before, when what was at stake was whether to let the wealthy Jews emigrate "for a fee" or whether to kill them right off the bat.

You have inherited your parents' racism and molded it to suit your own purposes. It's not the "what" that has changed but the "way": the way you concern yourselves with the Third World, the way you differentiate the good liberation movements from the bad according to the extent to which each satisfies your own revolutionary demands. Your willingness to conceal atrocities or even support them with propaganda as long as they are committed by your ideological allies against the right enemies exposes you as the talented offspring of those who quelled the Boxer uprising in China and liquidated the Hereros in South Africa. Of course, you don't dirty your own hands anymore instead, you work seated at a "countercultural" desk or standing behind the counter of a revolutionary bar.

I want to elaborate here only on that part of your racist reservoir that concerns me in particular: your anti-Semitism. That a left-winger cannot, by nature, so to speak, be an anti-Semite because this is the domain of the right wing is as popular an excuse as it is deceptive. And you cling to it. The blanket absolution you confer upon yourselves is further evidence of your lack of historical awareness. I bet the names Slansky and Rajk don't even ring a bell, and the Physicians' Trial in 1953 sounds to you like a series on the conflict between Hackethal and classical medicine.<sup>3</sup>

Why can't a left-winger be an anti-Semite? Are left-wingers better people per se? Don't left-wingers beat their wives and discriminate against gays? Your racism begins with the overestimation of your own morality. Granted, you don't scrawl swastikas on the walls and can readily distance yourselves from that epithet "Judah, to hell with you!" You aren't that primitive-

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<sup>3</sup> Broder refers here to postwar "show trials" against high-ranking Jews in the Communist party that led to the execution of many Eastern European Jews. Laszlo Rajk, the Hungarian foreign minister, was executed in 1949 on charges of anti-Sovietism and Titoism; Rudolf Slansky, the secretary of the Czechoslovakian Communist party, was executed in 1952 on charges of "bourgeois nationalism." The 1953 Physicians' Trial was Stalin's final anti-Semitic campaign against Jewish doctors shortly before his death in March 1953.

but the editors of the magazine *Das Reich* were just as embarrassed by the pejorative abuses printed in *Der Stürmer*.<sup>4</sup> Your anti-Semitism is subtle, refined by your consciousness and adapted to your political environment. I'll explain what I mean with a few concrete examples.

Late in 1978 West Berlin's Gallery 70 organized an exhibition on the subject of neo-Nazism. During the course of the exhibit's several-week run, discussions took place regularly at the gallery. I attended one-at issue were neo-Nazi incidents in West Berlin's schools. Around 150 teachers, most of them members of the German Educators' Union (GEW), reported on their experiences with extreme right-wing pupils in the attempt to assess fascist potential among youth. During the discussion, a young teacher-she was perhaps thirty years old-made the following statements: "Young people try to defend themselves against the dissemination of false information. The fact is that the concentration camps were first and foremost work camps, where artillery was produced cheaply, and only towards the end of the war, when defeat was foreseeable, did the Nazis begin the annihilation of the Jews. Today the Holocaust is used as Zionistic propaganda to justify the existence of the State of Israel?" I was speechless. It sounded as though she'd recited these lines straight from the *Nationalzeitung*. I looked at the teacher, a young lady with henna red hair, decently dressed in countercultural attire, and thought: "She must be about to follow up on that statement, she could not have meant what she just said ... ?" But she had said exactly what she meant. And the best thing about it was: nobody refuted her! Not one of the roughly 150 teachers stood up and said: "Look lady, either you're talking total nonsense or you're trying to test us, but we aren't about to fall into that kind of trap...?" Nothing happened. There were further discussions about extreme right-wing and fascist viewpoints among the pupils. I left the gallery convinced from head to toe: if these are the guarantors of an antifascist education, then the Viking youth don't need to do anything on their own initiative-these crammers are their best accomplices.

In the summer of 1980 I attended a discussion at a Literatrubel, a literary coffee klatsch in Hamburg. One young man took the floor and, addressing a not particularly significant statement I'd made, said that he agreed with me completely and was familiar with my work, but he had one problem: as an ally in the antifascist struggle, he had tremendous respect for me, but he couldn't accept my Zionism. He was completely at odds with my position on the State of Israel, I said nothing. I didn't have the slightest desire to so much as ask this guy what a Jew would have to do to be accepted today. This antifascist was doing the same thing his parents had done: he determined what he would like a Jew to do in order to deal with him or utilize him for his own purposes. At that moment, I decided to leave the antifascist struggle to those who needed it most.

I have, as you perhaps know, worked for a long time on a subject that might better appeal to you: neo-Nazism. For over two years I haven't said or written another word about it because I realized that this debate conceals more than it reveals. Everyone in this country-Franz Josef Strauf and yourselves included-can, with a clear conscience, disassociate themselves from swastika scrawlers and Adolf Hitler fans who still celebrate April 20. Outrage over such antiquated expressions of Nazi sentiments clears the air and at the same time obscures from view the fascist "alter ego" in Mr. and Mrs. Everyman and that includes you. A swastika on a house wall, an SS rune at a bus stop, a "Jews out!" on a Jewish shop-these are all anachronisms: forms of resent are right in step with the times. Gerhard Zwerenz, for example, makes a Jewish real

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<sup>4</sup> *Das Reich* was a widely circulated weekly during the Nazi period; *Der Stürmer* is the notorious Nazi publication that was edited by Julius Streicher from 1923-45.

estate broker and landowner his protagonist precisely because, as is common knowledge, there are so few Aryan representatives of this "breed" in this country."<sup>5</sup> The fact that it was directed against Jewish speculators played a decisive role in the squatters' movements in Frankfurt. We've been through all this before: as long as the major department stores were still under Jewish ownership, slogans circulated about the "Department Store Plague?" Pamphlets calling for people to gather at "mass rallies" read: "The Jew came and set up department stores right under the German merchant's nose; he destroyed his existence with his flamboyant, hard-sell advertising; he took the craftsmen's bread away; he put a stranglehold on the traders' neck...?' Later, after the department stores had been Aryanized, no one got worked up over the fact that they threatened the existence of small businesses as much as they had under Jewish owners. We're lucky the Jews haven't been credited with the decline of Berlin's Kreuzberg district-it's hard to imagine how this would fuel your imagination.

Your parents may have abided by the motto, "The Jews are our misfortune!" (or, "The Jews are to blame for everything!"), but, in the absence of Jewish multitudes, you have had to adapt the principle slightly. You just say: "Things Jewish are to blame!"

In October 1979 I published an essay in *Konkret* titled "I Am a Chauvinist" in which I declare my affinity for full-bosomed women: "Every bosom is a provocation, every bottom a challenge?"

On the one hand, my intent in "I Am a Chauvinist" was very serious. But, on the other hand, it was an ironic provocation directed against the ever-increasing proliferation of "softies"-men who spend their days preoccupied with questioning gender roles. They demonstrate their solidarity with the women's movement by squatting down to pee. In Germany, one would be well-advised to furnish every bit of satire with an instruction manual to avoid risking insurrection on the part of secondary school counselors, be they certified or not. In this case not only did dozens of *Konkret* readers-mostly men-run amok in a letter-writing frenzy (never once have I received such massive response to a "political" essay), but even a left-wing referee raised his voice to slap me on the wrist for my lack of consciousness. Just one month later, Hermann P. Piwitt assured the readers of *Konkret* that he had "nothing against tits and ass [either], who doesn't get a rise out of it?" But then he proceeded to chastise me for my "typically male" attributes: "High-handed arrogance and contempt for the sexual partner whose flesh is the only thing of interest?" Piwitt put my name together in the same sentence with the poet Bukowski's ("...pretty much a scumbag"). I'd have been flattered if he hadn't placed the infamous serial killer Fritz Honka from Hamburg third in his lineup of horror figures, following Broder and Bukowski. *En passant* Piwitt addressed the question of which "Weltanschauung" might have "messed up Broder so badly" and quickly arrived at "a notoriously patriarchal, that is to say, Jewish upbringing...?"

It would be futile to correct Piwittj actually and point out that the Jewish upbringing, which he sees as the cause of my Chauvinism, is by no means "notoriously patriarchal," but rather dominated by the mother. In the Jewish family, the father celebrates the prayers, but aside from that, he doesn't have much say. Accordingly, every Jewish boy with any lasting regard for his upbringing runs about his entire life with an Oedipus complex. It's not the issue here to fill the gap in Piwittician knowledge. Piwitt had no intent of making a statement about Jewish

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<sup>5</sup> The reference is to Gerhard Zwerenz's 1971 novel, *Die Erde ist so unbewohnbar wie der Mond* (*Earth is as uninhabitable as the moon*); the novel was used as the basis for Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1973 film *The Trash, The City, and Death*.

upbringing. Rather, he sought to hold some "Jewish" characteristic responsible for one of my behaviors that didn't suit him-whatever the cost.

The anti-Semitic syndrome is completely independent of its object. It is not the Jew's behavior that counts but rather the anti-Semite's need to put a negative twist on whatever a Jew does. And that is why an anti-Semite will always find something to sink his claws into. Years ago, Klaus Rainer Rohl accomplished something extraordinary in this regard. In a snide remark published in an op-ed piece about Henry Kissinger, he wrote that Kissinger's outstanding physical constitution could be traced back to a "several-thousand-year-long healthy, kosher diet": especially "garlic?" Rohl, an Elbchaussee Street snob, had no idea that garlic doesn't even have anything to do with kosher diet, but at the mere mention of a Jew, the anti-Semite reacts like Pavlov's dog to a bell, and the smell (or better: stench) of garlic goes straight up his angular, Aryan nose. I consider such reactions particularly telling because of the vegetative process they entail; when the id triumphs over the ego, then even the most enlightened intellectual is at a loss with regard to his own consciousness. He stumbles into a snare of his own making, but one that nevertheless escapes his eye.

During the Pope's visit to the Federal Republic, Emma, the "magazine by and for women," published an open letter to the itinerate representative of the Catholic church. The letter concerned itself with the sins the Catholic church has committed against women. Suddenly, in the middle of this open letter: "If Christians have any one thing to learn from the Talmud, it is this prayer of thanksgiving: 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who hast not made me a woman?'"

### **Subliminal Label Scam**

This interjection follows the same logic and ill-logic of Piwittician "Jewish upbringing" or the Rohlcian "kosher diet?" This citation is not from the Talmud Talmud but from a morning prayer for Jewish men. Misquoting a source can happen, but how does this author arrive at the Talmud of all things? The Talmud has always played a central role in the anti-Semitic platform. From the perspective of Jew-haters it is, so to speak, the cardinal sourcebook of Jewish vulgarities. If you were to assemble all that is attributed to the Talmud, the result would be a work that far exceeds the scope of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. In all likelihood, the woman who penned this letter once heard something negative about the Talmud and has associated it with Jewish misogyny ever since. As if there are not enough examples of discrimination against women in the Catholic church, from the witch persecutions to the cult of the Virgin Mary, she has to take recourse to a Jewish exemplar-and one that doesn't even hold up under the burden of proof.

What I'd like to know now is how non-Jewish men are initiated into their Chauvinism and women-hating, since they have had neither the benefit of a patriarchal Jewish upbringing nor of thanking God every day for not having made them women. You hold the Jews accountable not only for everything possible but also for every possible impropriety. You simply cannot let up on the Jews. The fact that the Enlightenment, the Labor movement, and any and all attempts at assimilation failed to avert the atrocities of Auschwitz doesn't even faze you. And the fact that you are compelled to concern yourselves with us again today certainly has more to do with the Jews than it does with you. You don't even realize that, like a train stuck in the mud and gravel, you proceed from precisely the same station where your parents were forced to stop in their thwarted efforts to extirpate Jewry from the world. Now you pursue the Final Solution to the

Jewish Question along ideological lines. Like all anti-Semites before you, your primary concern is this: the Jews should stop being Jews, only then can you accept them.

And if you think you are not anti-Semites just because you don't define yourselves as such, then let me tell you this: it wouldn't be the first time that the content claims listed on the label didn't quite jibe with what was actually in the package.

Your label scam could be subconscious, but that doesn't speak against its existence. On the contrary, it speaks for the great efficacy of what you have internalized. Your parents have done such a thorough job that your anti-Semitic potential wanders, so to speak, like a vagabond in a vacuum. Indeed, where should it take hold, now that Hermann Tietz (Bertie), Ullstein, and Mosse have been Aryanized and, unfortunately, it's clear that even Iwan Herstatt isn't a Jew?"<sup>6</sup> The few Jewish real estate moguls and speculators who catch your eye serve your purposes only briefly.

But thank God there is still the Uber-Jew, the State of Israel, which you fret over with bitter tenacity as though you had nothing better to do. Your anti-Zionism is nothing more than a souped up, left-wing variant of anti-Semitism: the same logic, the same methodology, the same vocabulary, only with "Zionist" standing in for "Jew?" And nothing has really changed. I needn't analyze the news coverage on Israel in the UZ, the Rote Fahne, the Neue, the taz, and so on.<sup>7</sup> I needn't prove for the umpteenth time that totally different standards are applied to Israel than to non-Jews. My everyday experiences and observations alone suffice.

For example, while visiting with a nice elderly professor in Berlin, we are joined by a social worker who works with prison inmates. He introduces us.

"Arc you that Broder who wants to go to Israel?"

"Yes?"

"Tell me then, how can a left-winger go to Israel?"

"Good question, ma'am, I'd be happy to provide you an answer just as soon as you tell me how a Jew can live in Germany after Auschwitz?"

And with that, our exchange is over. I had no desire to engage in a debate. Yet maybe I should have asked this young lady how a left-winger can stomach living in the Federal Republic without having to vomit more than he can eat day in and day out in a country that can afford to put a former SA man in the presidency, a country where countless mass murderers run free, and where the common democratic sentiment is determined by the rate of inflation. This question would undoubtedly have been unfair, because the left-wingers cannot be held responsible for the very milieu that sustains their own futility. But for a left-winger-assuming that lam one-to go to Israel is an accusation whose justification is apparently self-explanatory.

*Konkret*, a political magazine where I have published a lot of my work, printed in its November 1980 edition an advertisement for a "publishing house for holistic research" in Wobbenbull, postal code 2251. Even from afar, this publishing house's name and program reeks of "blood and soil?" Among the titles advertised: "Roland Bohlinger, racism in Israel? A lightning rod. Is Israel achieving what the Third Reich was accused of?" In a left-wing, decidedly antifascist newspaper, this is a real improvement The Third Reich is "accused" of something.

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<sup>6</sup> Hertie Konzern is a large department store chain founded by Hermann Tietz; Ullstein is the name of a publishing house in Berlin, founded in 1877; Mosse is an advertising firm.

<sup>7</sup> *UZ (Unsere Zeitung)* is the central organ of the German Communist party (DKP); *Die Rote Fahne* was the central organ of the KPD; *Die Neue* was an independent left-wing weekly newspaper; *die taz (die tageszeitung)* is the left-wing Berlin daily.

There exists, so to speak, an allegation, but the crime the Third Reich is charged with is being committed in Israel. I spoke to the *Konkret* people about this ad, and they were embarrassed by it. It "just slipped in," no one noticed, and it would not happen again .... All fine and good, but can someone imagine that an ad for a book about, for instance, the "Soviet genocide in Afghanistan" could also slip into the pages so unnoticed?

An evening at a bar in Hamburg, a group of journalists, writers, university people. A conversation about fascism and its consequences. A well-known left-wing theorist in the city named Oberlercher, an avowed antifascist, says: "The only thing the Jews have learned from their persecution is how to persecute others?"

A few days later, at a locale in Gottingen, this time a group of liberal lawyers, among them several liberal-minded judges. A discussion about the role played by the judiciary in the Third Reich prompts one of them to comment on the TV miniseries Holocaust. "I can still remember well the final scene," he said, "the younger son of the family Weiss says to his girlfriend: 'We are going to Palestine now? And then she says: 'But there are already people there? He says: 'Well, then they're just going to have to make room,' and ever since then, the Israelis have been doing the same thing to the Arabs that the Nazis did to the Jews;' A man from Freisler's Heirs and Co. saw the Holocaust movie, and the scene that best stands out in his memory is one that he uses to equate the Jews with the Nazis.<sup>8</sup> Beyond that, the film apparently left him unimpressed.

I can imagine how you arrive at this obscene analogy: "The Israelis are the Nazis of the Middle East" and "the Palestinians are the Jews of Israel" This is a diversionary tactic designed to bring you historical and psychological relief. Not that you feel any sense of guilt toward the Jews. Why should you? You haven't touched a hair on a single Jew's head. Still, you harbor a certain sense of uneasiness-there is something not quite right about your parents.

Most of you have never confronted your parents about their past. This was something families didn't talk about, and when you did ask questions, you were forbidden from doing so. You never got an answer, and if you did, it was at best something like this: "We knew nothing" or "What could we have done anyway?"

And it could be that your father didn't spend those years he doesn't talk about on the front busting Russian tanks, but rather in the Einsatzgruppen at Warthegau cleansing the country of Jews and Gypsies behind Germany's frontlines. It could be that the dress your mother is wearing in that pristine picture from 1942 once belonged to a Jewish woman who wasn't allowed to take it with her to Auschwitz. And if indeed your father really was "only" on the front (don't forget that the concentration camps could only work as long as the front was held) and your mother had sewn the dress herself, at least they owe you an explanation about what they were thinking when the Cohns and Blums next door suddenly disappeared.

I know, you don't have it easy with such a burden at your back. Unfortunately, we, the children of the persecuted, are in a better position. And so you lighten your load by projecting the confrontation you never had, or never could have, with your parents onto your parents' victims. It works: the Jews are the Nazis, the Palestinians are victims of Jews, and your parents get off scot-free (as do you). They have, so to speak, nothing to work on themselves. You can again look them in the face, because now you know where the Nazis who never existed in Germany are.

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<sup>8</sup> Dr. Roland Freisler (1893-1945) was a notorious cruel judge in Nazi Germany.



## Boundless Arrogance

But that's not all. Beyond the bounds of your own familial conflicts lies something else I have already mentioned: who among you didn't hear, as a child, horror stories about "the Jew" who is at fault for everything? For capitalism for communism, for inflation, unemployment, high interest rates, low interest rates, pornography, the war, the Schandfriede<sup>9</sup>-for everything the anti-Semite can't cope with and for which a scapegoat is needed. You just can't do it without this scapegoat. You need him like an addict needs his fix, and no act of will nor label scam ("We have nothing against Jews, only against Zionists" offers relief. All that will help is a painful withdrawal treatment, but you've never gotten around to that because, just like your parents, you suffer from an inability to mourn. Instead you absolve yourselves from any responsibility for German history: "I didn't stick no Jew in the KZ; I didn't shoot no Poles...?"

Your Jew of today is the State of Israel. Just as your parents thought they'd be better off without Jews, you think that without Israel there would be no conflicts in the Middle East. There isn't a single Arab country that is not in permanent conflict with at least one other country in that region: Egypt with Libya, Libya with Tunisia, Algeria with Morocco, Morocco with Mauritania, Jordan with Syria, Syria with Iraq, Iraq with Kuwait, South Yemen with North Yemen. But for you Israel is the only troublemaker, the only obstacle to peace.

I am not saying Israel is beyond criticism. Israel's stupid, nearsighted, and sometimes catastrophic politics must be criticized. But who is it that stands up in outrage over Israel? Over the settlement policy, over the violation of human rights in the occupied territories, over the social discrimination against Israel's Arabs? They're the same people who approve of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which allegedly has threatened the stability of Soviet Union, the same people who don't even know that Tibet has been occupied by China, who regard Pol-Pot's terrorist regime in Cambodia as a revolutionary people's government and ignore more than three million dead. They are the same ones who call Begin a terrorist, who do the honors before each despot, regardless of whether it is Ildi Amin, Khadafy, or Khomeini, as long as he decorates himself with the "anti-imperialist" label. They are the same ones who don't give a damn about how the Kurds in Turkey are slowly but surely culturally cleansed, and how people are massacred by the hundreds in Iran and Iraq, the same ones who haven't heard a word about the genocide in Ethiopia and who overlook the ongoing "special handling" of the Gypsies in the Federal Republic.

But just who do you think you are? What is the source of your arrogance? Half the day you busy yourselves with churning out platitudes, the other half with finding the proper "assessments?" None of these political debacles makes you older or wiser. The development in China took you completely by surprise. You didn't have time to revise your eternally valid standpoints as quickly as the Beijing People's Daily changed course. You were dumbfounded by the war between Iraqi and Persian revolutionaries. You have no idea how to react to the introduction of preventative internment in India and racial unrest there, which costs thousands of lives. That homosexuals, adulteresses, and prostitutes in Iran are murdered by the government doesn't concern you in the least.

Your free-floating potential for sympathy toward the people of the Third World wanders from continent to continent, settling sometimes here for a while, sometimes there. At present it is

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<sup>9</sup> The term the National Socialists used to describe the conditions of "peace" prevailing after the Treaty of Versailles (June 28, 1919).

El Salvador, last year it was Rhodesia, the year before that it was Timor. And by the time bell bottoms have gone out of fashion in spring, you will again discover something new for revolutionary deployment in remote countries, maybe a liberation front that will liberate the Antarctic from the polar ice cap.

In your changing repertoire there is one hit that always goes over well: Palestine. No other piece of land is dearer to you; no other people nearer your heart; no conflict pushes your buttons more than this. Your interest in Palestinians can be attributed to one thing alone: it is the Jews who are oppressing them. That is all that matters. It is the motor driving you; otherwise you would not waste a single thought on the Palestinians. They just provide the stage set for you to put on your anti-Semitic programs. This too can be proven.

Not a single left-winger was incensed by the fact that the people who conducted the "selection" of Jewish passengers at Entebbe were young Germans, children of the post-generation. You didn't get upset until an Israeli commando released the hostages. And then you sent condolences-by telegram-to "His Excellence Idi Amin" and severely condemned the "violation of the sovereignty of Uganda," as if "state sovereignty" were something sacred to left-wingers. Violation of state sovereignty was nonetheless unimportant to you when a German terrorist commando attacked an FRG embassy in Stockholm.

## **Indifference to Truth**

These are just newer and newer variations of the same old game you're playing Jews are afforded less latitude, but more is expected of them. They're expected to let themselves be beaten and bullied. At best, they're allowed to complain about it, never to retaliate. And when Jews behave the same way others always have, you get your hackles up. You just can't stand for it, whether it's a Jewish property owner in Frankfurt or an Israeli commando enterprise in Africa.

When Brigitte Schulz and Thomas Reuter were kidnapped by the Israeli secret service in Kenya and detained in Israel, it was an awful thing beyond the pale of justice and law, regardless of whether the two Germans had actually attempted to shoot down the El Al plane or not. You ran off at the mouth, foaming with rage at this "Zionist coup;" But when news was released about at least two dozen Germans, mostly development aid volunteers, who disappeared without a trace in Argentina, when Elisabeth Kasemann, a clergyman's daughter, was murdered at the hands of government agencies in Argentina, your reactions-compared with Schulz/ Reuter in Israel-were moderate. Your rage, after all, wasn't directed at Jews. We've been through all this before: whenever a child turned up missing in Russia or Poland during Passover, it was clear to everyone-once again, the Jews needed Christians' blood to bake Passover bread. There often followed a pogrom. Afterward, the Christian assassins were always terribly disappointed when a child assumed to have been "butchered" according to kosher rites showed up, or when it turned out that an Aryan perpetrator was responsible for the child's disappearance. Even today, tales about ritual murder are more credible than official party statements in Poland.

On Christmas Eve 1980, I listened to the news on WDR 2, the state-sponsored television and radio station in Cologne. Headlines from Rome: "In Pope John Paul H's opinion, Christians and Muslims are obligated to cooperate in order to attain freedom for Jerusalem and return the Holy City to all religious groups:" I won't go into details about actions taken by the institution the Pope personifies in the interest of peace and of putting an end to the genocide against the Jews between Christmas Eve of 1939 and Christmas Eve of 1944. I just want to remind you, in all modesty, that, up until the Six-Day War in 1967, not a single Pope had ever called for

opening the "Holy City to all religious groups:' That's because, until then, the Jews were the only religious group with restricted access to their sacred sites. Today, though-under Jewish sovereignty. Jerusalem is open to followers of all faiths, so of course the supreme Shepherd of the Catholic church feels compelled to campaign for the attainment of "freedom for Jerusalem" The worst part about it: no one is outraged by it; there is no outcry.

*Ressentiment* against the Jews almost seems to be as fundamental an anthropological constant as hunger and the sex drive. In any case, it is the least common denominator in the Occident-the one thing just about everyone from the Vatican to U1e Kremlin can agree upon. At least in this regard, you are right in step with the rhythm of Herr Karol Wojtyla. And you have something else in common with him: total indifference to the facts. The tales of ritual murder were as difficult to refute with facts as was that classic work of anti-Semitic propaganda, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, penned by the czarist secret police. And, when it suits your purpose, you're just as loose with your handling of facts.

You frankly don't have a clue about anything, yet always a pat answer for everything. You are oblivious to the fact that Israel took in the same number of Jews from Arab countries as Arabs who fled Palestine in 1948. You talk about Palestine and what you have in mind is the small coastal strip, the territory that encompasses Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. What you don't know is that, historically, the territory east of Jordan once belonged to Palestine, and it wasn't until 1922 that the Brits "ceded" it to the Hash emit Dynasty from which King Hussein descended. You don't know either that King Hussein's grandfather, Abdullah, advocated for a peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs and was assassinated by Arab terrorists in 1947 because of it. You reject everything that could rattle your prefabricated resentment.

The January 1981 issue of *Emma* appeared on the market as I was writing this essay. On the back cover there was a preview of "the next *Emma*." Among other things, there was an announcement for the following topic: "Palestine: Ingrid Strobl was there." Where was Frau Strobl? In Palestine. She flew from Frankfurt to Tel Aviv, drove from there across Israel to Jerusalem, and met her PLO friends in East Jerusalem. For *Emma*, Israel no longer exists-the second phase of the Final Solution is obviously already a done deal and only a matter of time.

I asked Alice Schwarzer what she was thinking when she made this announcement. She told me she hadn't had anything particular in mind-apologizing for something based on thoughtlessness without realizing that it's the very thoughtlessness of it that makes it so bad. How self-evident the unthinking annihilation of Jewish existence has again become-so self-evident, in fact, that it doesn't even enter your mind.

Meanwhile, Frau Strobl, back from Palestine, reports from Cologne that the Jews have no business in Palestine. It's absolutely silly to claim that just because some Hebrew tribes had once lived there two thousand years ago...

I didn't even begin to attempt an explanation of the historical, religious, and metaphysical ties that she might not be able to understand but which play an important role for others. I took recourse to a simpler line of argumentation and said that for two thousand years we tried without the formal structure of a state and experienced plenty of difficulties. Frau Strobl, a Doctor of Philosophy, replied that we should try to establish the Jewish state somewhere else, maybe in Bavaria, but we should leave the Palestinians alone; they hadn't done us any harm.

There's something to that statement. As a matter of fact, Palestinians are footing a part of the bill, for which Frau Strobl's parents, *pars pro toto*, are responsible. But Frau Strobl keeps silent on this front; instead, she recommends that the Israelis haul their asses out of Palestine.

At least Frau Strobl is honest about her resentment. She concedes that, for her, it's not about a few occupied territories, the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights; for her, Israel would still be an occupying country that should be dissolved, even if it limits itself to the city of Tel Aviv. She is not concerned about a just balance in the Middle East, not concerned that both sides, Israelis and Arabs, should compromise and arrive at some sort of modus vivendi, lest they all go down together. She is concerned, like many German left-wingers, about the principle: there should be no Jewish state. This is the second leg on the road to the Final Solution, and your ticket's already been booked in advance.

While your mothers and fathers have moved beyond Auschwitz to daily life, as if the whole thing were nothing more than a rain-soaked summer, while German courts debate the "authenticity" of Anne Frank's diary and the propaganda of the right wing declares not only the diary but the whole Jewish persecution a fraud, while the youth born during Ludwig Erhard's reign make silly jokes about how many Jews fit into a VW ashtray,<sup>10</sup> you agitate for the dissolution of the State of Israel, and continue, though with different means, the work of Adolf Eichmann. Whoever denies the right of a Jewish state's existence forty years after Auschwitz and though not altogether directly-pursues a political solution that would lead to the destruction of Israel should know the goal of his campaign. And he should also know that he will not be able to wash his hands in innocence if...

I'm at the end: at the end of this article, at the end of my rage. And I'm also finished with you, my left-wing friends. I won't suffer your stupidity anymore; I won't bother to tell you what your parents kept secret anymore; I won't criticize you or enlighten you, I won't be your token antifascist Jew-I don't want anything to do with you.

This is the first essay I have written from the us-and-them perspective. Even one year ago, I wouldn't have done such a thing. But there's no other way, even though I know I may be doing some of you a disservice: the one Uwe or another, the Manfred and the Detlef, the Barbara and the Hilde, the Peter and the Hanno, the Gunter and the Gerhard, and certainly some others whose names don't occur to me now.

Back in the old days, every German knew at least one fine, upstanding Jew Today, I know a couple of fine, upstanding Germans.

So it is that times change.

Translated by Qinna Shen

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<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Erhard, a CDU/CSU politician, held high cabinet posts under Adenauer and was later elected to vice chancellor and minister of finance. Following Adenauer's 1963 resignation, Erhard became chancellor. He resigned in 1966. He continued to play a significant role in right-wing politics to the time of his death in 1977.

## Why I Am Leaving

After about fifteen years' conscious public political writing, I no longer see any sense in continuing this work. It's not that I've been prevented from doing my work; I haven't encountered any more difficulties than others-rather, fewer. When it came down to it, the solidarity was there. If I nevertheless quit involving myself in matters that concern this Republic, there are three reasons for it:

- I won't continue these surrogate battles, working myself up daily over things that the majority of Germans don't get worked up over. In the long run, history cannot be "mastered" predominately on the backs of its victims.

- I have many personal friends here but as good as no political allies. The right-wing "philo-Semites" like Strauf and Springer were always out of the question for me as allies, since I cannot ally myself with reactionaries just because they happen to have fallen in love with the Jews for once.

- Nor can I join the ranks of the left wing in the fight against reactionaries and repression as long as they only accept me when my Jewishness-as rudimentary as it is-doesn't strike them as troublesome. The belief in the historical and political necessity for a Jewish state is one unshakeable, fundamental aspect of that Jewishness.

Left-wingers in this country have devoted considerable thought to a great number of things: the role of the Left in a constitutional state, of women in men's society, of workers in capitalism, and of art in commerce. But to ask how Jews in the post-Auschwitz landscape must feel about the anti-Zionist uproar on the Left-that doesn't even enter their minds.

Translated by Qinna Shen