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"Like the Storm in the Cloud": A Study of Antisemitism Within the West German '68ers', 1966 to 1976.

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Introduction

The late 1960s saw young people across the world develop a sense of alienation from both their parents and the institutions of state, giving rise to a plethora of leftist movements. However, this phenomenon had a particular intensity in West Germany because of the historical legacy of Nazism. This drove a deeper wedge between the older generations and what came to be known as the '68ers', which drew its adherents from the country's first post-war generation, born mostly in the decade from 1938 to 1948[1]. This post-war generation of left-wing activists had a deep suspicion of authoritarian structures in society, exacerbated by the presence of many former Nazis in Germany's political and economic establishment, and sought to confront and break free from this National Socialist heritage[2]. *Stranger in my Own Country,* a collection of essays published by German-Jewish leftists in 1979, describe the continued antisemitism they perceived in West Germany and even the 68er movement[3]. Leah Fleischmann and the publication's editor Henrik Broder both emigrated to Israel as a result. In her essay, *Why I'm Leaving*, Fleischmann concludes that the post-war generation was perpetuating the antisemitism of their parents, commenting that "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree"[4]. Broder argued that his former comrades had unresolved antisemitic feelings[5]. There has been no detailed study of these claims and I will endeavour to fill this gap in the historiography.

[1] Hans Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany's 1968 Generation and the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 16.
[2] Jeremy Veron, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2003), p. 33.
[3] *Fremd im eigenen Land*, ed. Henryk Broder and Michel Lang (Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979) pp. 138-143.
[4] Lea Fleischmann, 'Warum Ich Gehe', in *Fremd im eigenen Land*, p. 143.
[5] Roland Dollinger & Henryk Broder, 'Henryk M. Broder über sein Leben in Deutschland und Israel, Antisemitismus in Deutschland, die Beziehung zwischen Deutshcland und Juden. Gespräch mit Roland Dollinger', *The German Quarterly*, 76 (2003), 1-10 (p. 3).

My dissertation will examine the origins and extent of antisemitic ideas amongst the West German radical left, a movement which had largely arisen from young Germans' frustration with the perceived failure of their parents' generation to admit and atone for its crimes against the Jews.

Whilst the sources, both secondary and primary, use the terms 'radical left' and 'New Left', I will be referring to the 68ers' ideology and activism as part of the radical left. Although the 68ers were inspired by New Left ideology, they developed it in a distinct and more radical way[6]. This led to the movement officially breaking ties with its New Left mentors[7]. Although the student movement which spawned the 68ers dates to 1961, it began in earnest in 1966[8]. It comprised various student organisations and non-students, though operated for the most part under the auspices of certain key institutions: the SDS (Socialist German Student Organisation), the Republican Club - a left-wing debating club which was key in the development of ideology and the organisation of protests - and Kommune 1, a Berlin commune which was home to some of the movement's most influential activists[9]. Together forming the APO (Extra Parliamentary Opposition), they developed an increasingly radical ideology. The student movement would officially come to an end with the dissolution of the SDS in 1970[10]. However, the 68ers' radical left movement would continue through a myriad of smaller groups, all still drawing on the radical ideology developed between 1966 and 1970. Indeed, Herf shows that radical left groups grew after 1970[11]. Although the movement existed in some form for

[6] Kundnani, p. 28.
[7] Robert Fine and Philip Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left: On the Return of the Jewish Question* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 62.
[8] Richard L. Merritt, 'The Student Movement in West Berlin', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1969), pp. 516-533 (p. 521).
[9] Merritt, p. 521.
[10] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, pp. 113- 114.
[11] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, pp. 113- 114.

decades, this dissertation will focus on the decade between 1966 and 1976. This timeframe is when the 68er generation, the subject of this study, were most active, beginning with the rise of the student movement and ending with the Entebbe hijacking, an event which illuminated the problem of antisemitism.

The orthodox view of the historiography is that the 68ers succeeded in helping Germany break free from its authoritarian past[12]. This remains the dominant view in the English-speaking world, with Jaraush and Geyer seeing the youth movement as instrumental in helping to democratise Germany and move it away from its nationalist legacy[13]. However, studies have increasingly shown that the movement was more complex and contradictory. The discussion of antisemitism amongst the 68er generation is a minor part of the revised scholarship. It is especially noteworthy that the issue has almost exclusively been studied through the prism of the 68ers' anti-Zionism.

Historians such as Stein point towards the 68ers' radical left-wing ideology itself as inherently antisemitic, arguing it shared many similarities to traditional antisemitic tenets[14]. Yet this explanation takes insufficient account of the specific role of Germany's recent past and could just as readily be applied to radical left movements elsewhere. Others, such as Kloke and Haury offer more convincing accounts, arguing that anti-Zionism was connected to archetypal antisemitism. They agree that the 68ers' anti-Zionism developed from an anti-imperialist

[12] Rolf Uesseler, *Die 68er: Macht kaputt was euch kaputt macht* (Munich: Heyne, 1998), p. 253.
[13] Konrad Jarausch & Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) p. 238.
[14] Timo Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitisum und Israelkritik: Antizinoismus in der Deutschen Linken* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2011) p. 81.

worldview[15] which characterised leftist movements, but argue that this became increasingly radical, motivated by an antisemitic desire to relieve German national guilt by demonising the Jewish state[16].

The study has been furthered by historians who have examined the impact which this antisemitism had on the West German Jewish community. Kraushaar brought to light the attempted bombing of a Jewish community centre in West Berlin in 1969 on the anniversary of Kristallnacht[17]. However, his discussion of antisemitism among the 68ers is confined to the final chapters, with most of the book merely narrating a "whodunit crime story"[18]. His analysis adds little to the discussion of antisemitism, regarding it primarily as a radical form of anti-Zionism[19]. Herf, draws on the perspective of the West German Jewish community[20]. However, his book does not make a sufficiently clear distinction between antisemitism and anti-Zionism for two reasons. First, his main focus is the anti-Zionist policies of the East German government. Second, he does not regard the distinction as especially important, stating that to the victims, "it made no difference whether their enemies were motivated by the atavism of anti-Semitism or the more fashionable anti-Zionism of the global Left"[21].

[15] Martin Kloke, 'Israelkritik und Anti-Zionismus in der deutshcen Linken: ehrbarer Antisemitismus?', in *Aktueller Antisemitismus- Ein Phänomen der Mitte*, ed. Monika Schwarz-Friesel, Evyata Friesel and Jehuda Reinharz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 73- 91 (p. 80).
[16] Thomas Haury, 'Zur Logik des Bundesdeutschen Anti-Zionismus', in *Vom Anti-Zionismus zum Antisemitismus*, ed. Léon Poliakov (Freiburg: Ça ira-Verlag, 1992), pp. 125-159 (p. 153).
[17] Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), pp. 8-9.
[18] Karrin Hanshew, Hanshew on Kraushaar, *'Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindhaus'*, Online version < http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=13622 > [accessed 20 April 2021], np.
[19] Kraushaar, pp. 84- 85.
[20] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1997) p. 3.
[21] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 460-461.

It is understandable that historians view antisemitism among 68ers through the lens of anti-Zionism. Indeed, the first critiques of antisemitism coming from the radical left emerged due to its increasingly strident anti-Zionism. Anti-Zionism was also central to the 68ers' identity and, after 1967, effectively a condition of membership [22]. As a form of "detour communication", anti-Zionism allowed the movement to articulate antisemitic feelings without breaking the post-war taboo of outright antisemitism and therefore became the primary way in which antisemitism was expressed[23].

However, this approach does not sufficiently analyse the origins of the strands of antisemitism amongst the 68ers, as it essentially looks at the issue back to front. Focusing on their feelings towards Israel obscures the more fundamental perspective of how the 68ers felt about Jewish people in general. For example, Kloke and Kraushaar both refer to the fact that anti-Zionism was motivated by, and therefore evidence of, antisemitic resentment, but do not offer much detail[24].

Kundnani's study of the 68er generation has, to an extent, attempted to uncouple the focus on anti-Zionism from an exploration of the 68ers' antisemitism. He argues that antisemitism came from an underlying continuity in the way of thinking from the 'Auschwitz Generation' to the 68ers[25]. Further, he argues that the contradictory nature of many of the movement's ideas led directly to antisemitism[26]. Whilst interesting, Kundnani's analysis suffers from two key flaws. First, he fails to fully develop the ideas he adumbrates, presumably because exploring the issue

[22] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 20.
[23] Beyer, H. "Theorien Des Antisemitismus: Eine Systematisierung." *Kölner Zeitschrift Für Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie*, vol. 67, no. 3, 2015, pp. 573–589 (p. 585).

[24] Kraushaar, p. 294.
[25] Kundnani, p. 92.
[26] Kundnani, p. 92- 93.

of antisemitism is not his main objective and is confined to only a few pages. Second, he relies heavily on secondary sources (other than a series of interviews with leading figures in the movement which did not really address the question of antisemitism).

The historiography has therefore largely focused on antisemitism in the 68er movement only where it has expressed itself as anti-Zionism. I will endeavour to fill this gap in the historiography. Whilst the topics of antisemitism and anti-Zionism cannot always be entirely divorced, this study will focus on the prevalence of antisemitism among the 68er generation.

The first chapter will examine how the 68ers' issues with their German identity helped to foster antisemitic sentiment. To Judt, the movement "was grounded in the rejection of everything their parents represented - everything"[27]. This chapter will show that some 68ers were not, however, immune from absorbing the antisemitism from their parents' generation. Further, their identity crisis led some in the movement to resent the Jews, who were perceived as standing in the way of reconciliation with their Germanness. Paradoxically, their left-wing convictions prevented those with antisemitic sentiments from recognising and working through them.

The second chapter will focus on the 68ers' anti-capitalism. Considerable attention has been given to how the radical left's view of fascism as the inevitable consequence of capitalism could be used to exculpate their parents' generation. I will supplement the historiography by

[27] Tony Judt, *Post War: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Vintage, 2010), p. 417.

examining how some 68ers combined anti-capitalism with traditional antisemitic tropes in order to rationalise their hostility towards Jews.

The third chapter will examine the anti-imperialist worldview shared by all factions within the 68ers[28]. The chapter will again draw on established arguments to demonstrate that this ideology was used to relativise Germany's Nazi past. This would have antisemitic consequences when applied to Israel. Many in the radical left saw opposition to Israel not just as the natural extension of their anti-imperialist worldview but also as a way of relieving their guilt over the Holocaust.

The final chapter will argue that the anti-Zionism of many 68ers contained an antisemitic element, which led to the terror attacks against Jews in Germany. Drawing on the testimony of 68ers themselves, it is clear that Zionism was seen as a global conspiracy with diaspora Jews as its agents.

The subject of antisemitism, especially concerning Germany, is "as heated as any modern history" and must therefore be approached with caution[29]. I will refer to a variety of primary sources which provide different perspectives. Accounts from disillusioned Jewish 68ers such as Broder will be used cautiously. The internal debate which Broder and Fleischmann initiated in the late 1970s provoked responses from some 68ers, who took the opportunity to examine their antipathy towards Jews. Also, Gerd Koenen, a former SDS member turned historian, has also given us his account of antisemitism from within the radical left. Both accusers and

[28] Haury, pp.138-139.
[29] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. ix.

accused tend to make sweeping statements about the entire movement. These cannot always be taken at face value but nonetheless indicate the prominence of specific ideas. I will also draw heavily on *Agit883*, a prominent radical left-wing journal in West Berlin, with a circulation of around 10,000 copies[30]. *Agit883* affords an insight into radical ideology; as Brown has argued, the underground press was key in developing and interpreting radical politics and popular culture[31].

[30] Aribert Reimann, '3 Letters from Amman: Dieter Kunzelmann and the Origins of German Anti-Zionism during the Late 1960s', in *A Revolution of Perception?: Consequences and Echoes of 1968*, ed. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014) p. 87.
[31] Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the global sixties: the anti-authoritarian revolt, 1962- 1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 14.

Chapter 1

In this chapter I will examine how, torn by inner conflicts over their national identity, some of the 68ers retained - and even developed further - antisemitic views. As the first post-war generation, confronted with the crimes of their country's recent past, the 68ers faced the unprecedented challenge of having to try and define what it meant to be German after the Nazis. This issue lay at the heart of the radical left-wing movement throughout the late 1960s and 1970s.

My analysis on how this inner conflict of identity helped to give rise to a seam of antisemitism among the radical left will be illustrated by an issue of the left-wing periodical *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*. Its June 1983 issue entitled *'Germans, Leftists, Jews'*, examined the convergence of German identity, left-wing ideology and antisemitism. The issue is split into three parts. The first is a series of autobiographical essays written by non-Jewish German contributors, which will be my focus. The authors, the journalist Rolf Ebert and the periodical's two joint editors, Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm and Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, were all radical left-wing intellectuals and veteran members of the 68er movement. Their contributions are interesting due to their introspective approach. Looking at their own experiences, thought processes, and antipathy towards Jews, the authors were able to expose the shortcomings of the movement. The personal focus of their essays attracted heavy criticism from prominent left-wing contemporaries, notably those who had uncovered the issue of antisemitism in the first place. Broder accused the authors of being self-centred and blatantly antisemitic [32]. Yet despite the periodical's notoriety at the time, it seems to have been overlooked by historians. Whilst inflammatory, the attempt by the authors appears sincere.

[32] Henryk Broder, 'Tötliches Gerede', *Die Zeit*, 23. September 1983. Online Version <https://www.zeit.de/1983/39/toedliches-gerede/komplettansicht> [accessed 20 April 2021], np.

Now older and having distanced themselves from the radicalism of their youth, the authors have found new motivations to confront the burden of German guilt. For Hoffmann-Axthelm this is the fear of the unresolved historical litigation he will pass on to his children[33]. Their candid personal insights are valuable in illuminating an inner conflict between a German and a 'leftist' identity, and how this provided fertile ground for the potential growth of antisemitic feeling amongst some in the 68er generation.

A crucial and distinctive element of the West German radical left, which the historiography has not always fully taken into account, is that they sought to separate themselves from German national identity as a whole. The post-war generation of West Germans were not only confronted with the realisation that their parents' generation was complicit in the crimes of Nazism, but that Germany as a country had inherited a collective national guilt. This was clear to Hoffmann-Axthelm from childhood[34] and caused Knödler-Bunte to pretend to be of a different nationality when traveling abroad[35], a common practice amongst his generation. Historians such as Elias have noted that in West Germany, the post-war generation used far left ideology to cleanse themselves of Nazism and the guilt associated with its crimes, seeing it as an "antitoxin to Hitler's teachings"[36]. However, Hoffmann-Axthelm's essay in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* shows that the 68ers' disillusionment with their national identity went far beyond just National Socialism, including the entire German identity. What Hoffman-Axthelm calls the "Deutsche Mythos"; can be literally translated as "German myth", though its meaning is broader, referring to the ideals of German history, culture, and traditions[37]. He argues that

[33] Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, 'Ins Unreine Geschrieben', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation,* June 1983, p.31
[34] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p. 30.
[35] Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, 'Verlängerung des Schweigens', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation,* June 1983, p.44.
[36] Norbert Elias, *Studien über die Deutschen: Machtkämpfe und Habitusentwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989) p. 11, (translated myself).
[37] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p. 28, translated myself)

the German national myth has been tainted through its incorporation into National Socialism[38]. To explain his point, Hoffmann-Axthelm uses Wagner, a totemic German cultural icon yet also an important influence on Hitler[39]. In saying he "cannot want Wagner and do away with Hitler's Wagnerism," Axthelm demonstrates the impossibility for his generation of guilt-free re-engagement with even the positive aspects of their country's past[40]. The interconnectedness of German national identity meant the West German radical left could not make a distinction between what has been called "an imagined 'other Germany', defeated without battle in 1933"[41] and the Germany that came after. As Hoffmann writes, they only had "this murderous one"[42].

The West German radical left of this period therefore developed in a distinctive way, using their far-left ideology as a replacement identity. This was unique to the West German movement, as the post-war radical left in other countries based their movements on national legacies. In France, the movement drew on values of revolutionary republicanism and the American left envisioned their own interpretation of the American dream[43]. Even in other former fascist countries, such as Italy, the left drew on traditions of the anti-fascist 'resistenza'[44]. With no uncompromised national tradition to draw on, former SDS member Gerd Koenen describes the Radical Left having a "strong, if not obsessive desire to collectively separate from the contaminated body of the surrounding Fatherland and Mother Society"[45]. Only by choosing

[38] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p. 28.
39Anson Rabinbach and Sander Gilman, *The Third Reich Sourcebook* (Oakland: University of Califorinia Press, 2013) p. 805.
40 Hoffmann-Axthelm, p. 31, (translated myself).
[41] Gerd Koenen, 'Armed Innocence, or Hitler's Children Revisited', in *Baader Meinhof Returns: History and Cultural Memory of German Left-Wing Terrorism*, ed. Gerrit-Jan Berendse and Ingo Cornils (New York: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 29-38 (p.29).
[42] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p.31, (translated myself)
[43] Koenen, *Armed Innocence*, p. 29.
[44] Dorothea Hauser, 'Transnational Networks and Narratives after 1968' in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977*, ed. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008), pp. 168-324 (p.271).
[45] Koenen, *Armed Innocence*, p. 29.

the "other side" to their parents could they escape association with a damaged and guilty German identity[46]. Therefore, counterculture and the breaking of traditional social values became a form of resistance to German national identity. The most significant aspect of their new identity was a new socialist ideology, with the study of socialist theory being far more central in the West German movement than anywhere else[47]. The movement's intellectual landscape offers no consensus; the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory acted as a starting point which Koenen describes as being "wildly mixed with texts and quotations from Marx and Mao, Guevara and Stalin, or whatever was at hand"[48]. Yet, despite internal differences in the specific interpretation of socialist theory, the aims were the same. First, to critique capitalist, bourgeois West German society; second, to adopt an international identity based on international socialist solidarity, further distancing themselves from their national origins[49]. In this way, the radical left of the post-war generation tried to redefine themselves by renouncing their German identity either entirely, or in all but name.

However, the *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* authors came to recognise this attempt to renounce their German identity as a failure and expressed their desire to reconnect with it. Both Knöder-Bunte and Hoffmann-Axthelm describe growing up in an environment still steeped in traditional German nationalism, which had a greater impact than they had previously thought [50],[51]. Indeed, both admit that through considering the question of antisemitism, they had developed a more nuanced perspective on their national identity. Knödler-Bunte now recognises Germanness, "as a specific way of living and thinking, as a connection between

[46] Koenen, *Armed Innocence*, p 29-30.
[47] Kundnani, p. 18.
[48] Koenen, *Armed Innocence*, p. 28.
[49] Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945- 1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.66.
[50] Knödler-Bunte, p.41.
[51] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p.33.

feelings, moods, landscapes, people, in which I learned to say 'I' "[52]. He recognises that nationality was more than an identity and history one could simply renounce; it is the environment in which he learned how to identify himself and in which he constructed his radical leftist identity. Hoffmann-Axthelm laments that he, "can't step out of this identity"[53], and "can't simply be an international intellectual, but only ever a German intellectual" [54]. Both authors realise that they have not only retained their Germanness but positively want to reconnect with it. Indeed, when lamenting not being able to enjoy Wagner, it is clear from the tone that Hoffmann-Axthelm wishes he could but does not want the feeling of guilt associated with it[55]. Knödler-Bunte writes that he finds himself wishing he could bridge the void between his generation and that of his parents[56]. Both have come to accept that embracing their Germanness means accepting an identity which includes Germany's "fatal history"[57]. This acceptance of their German identity was criticised by left-wing journalist Eike Geisel, who accused Knödler-Bunte and Hoffmann-Axthelm of seeking a compromise with Nazism and antisemitism in order to redeem Germany[58]. Geisel's view is that only the complete separation will suffice, arguing that Germans can will themselves to be not-German[59]. In this criticism Geisel seems to miss the point made by *Ästhetik und Kommunikation's* editors, that precisely this approach has failed.

The two writers' admission that they wished to retain their Germanness enables us to identify two potential sources of antisemitism amongst the West German radical left. Broder has

[52] Knödler-Bunte, p.35, (translated myself).
[53] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p.31, (translated myself).
[54] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p.32, (translated myself).
[55] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p. 31.
[56] Knödler-Bunte, p.37.
[57] Knödler-Bunte, p. 36, (translated myself).
[58] Eike Geisel, 'Familienzussamenhang', *TAZ*, 7th July 1983, p.9.
[59] Geisel, p.9.

argued that antisemitism was culturally ingrained in German society and therefore inevitable, regardless of political affiliation[60]. This arguably simplistic position is almost certainly coloured by Broder's bitter personal experience. However, Hoffmann-Axthelm's observation to some extent corroborates Broder's claim. Hoffmann-Axthelm argues that the 68ers as a whole were to an extent aware and fearful of a parentally-inculcated antisemitism[61]. Whilst it would be an exaggeration to say that the radical left in general was subject to antisemitism passed on to them by their parents, this was true of a number of them.

The burden of national guilt thrust upon the 68ers led to secondary antisemitism, a phenomenon describing a form of animosity towards Jews due to feelings of guilt and resentment over the Holocaust[62]. Hoffmann-Axthelm gives an exemplar, whilst he recognises the persistence of antisemitism in West Germany and accepting the task of working through German history to address this, he resents and envies his Jewish fellow-leftists, Broder and Fleischmann, who moved to Israel. Hoffmann-Axthelm resents Broder's ability to escape German national guilt, as he can "step from one leg to the other and say, as a Jew he is not bound to Germany."[63] He sees Broder's position as the "descendant of the Victims" as a privilege, one which Jews lord over the post-war generation of Germans[64]. In his closing remarks, Hoffmann references the German Jews who emigrated to Israel, writing:

[60] Henryk Broder, *Der Ewige Antisemit: über Sinn und Funktion eines beständigen Gefühls* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986) p. 130.
[61] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p.29.
[62] Lars Renmann, 'Guilt, Resentment and Post-Holocaust Democracy: The Frankfurt School's Analysis of "Secondary Antisemitism" in the Group Experiment and Beyond' *Antisemitism Studies*, Vol. 1, 2017, pp. 4- 37 (p. 4).
[63] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p.31 (translated myself).
[64] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p. 31 (translated myself).

> "I can understand anyone who cannot live in Germany, and the best thing one can do in that case is to leave this country. And even though I understand, it hurts me. I would prefer to live in a country which one would not have to leave to be able to be halfway satisfied. I cannot leave and don't want to leave. In spite of everything this is my country"[65].

Although he understands why German Jews might want to leave, there is a subtle accusation. By being hurt he implies that by leaving, they are letting the post-war generation down. By saying it is best that they leave, one gets the impression Hoffmann-Axthem believes one should either love Germany or leave it; those German Jews who speak out about feeling alienated by persistent antisemitism have no place in post-war Germany.

Knödler-Bunte echoes this defensive stance but goes further[66]. When the Jewish authors of *Stranger in my Own Country* complained about continued antisemitism, he accuses them of exploiting their victimhood and remarks on what he calls his "massive anti-Jewish effect"[67]. He identifies the source of this as resentment over the question of, "Why the hell, they [the Jews] can always exclude themselves from this historical shit, why can they always free themselves from responsibility?"[68]. Knödeler-Bunte follows this with a page of blatantly antisemitic remarks; he refers to the Jews' own complicity in the rise of Nazism and a global Zionist conspiracy, both of which will be examined at length later[69]. Although he posits all these statements as rhetorical questions, they constitute clear expressions of his genuine

[65] Hoffmann-Axthelm, p. 32 (translated myself).
[66] Knödler-Bunte, p.35.
[67] Knödler-Bunte, pp.35-36, (translated myself).
[68] Knödler-Bunte, p.36, (translated myself).
[69] Knödler-Bunte, p.36.

resentment. Like Hoffmann-Axthelm, Knödler-Bunte envies the Jews' legitimate claims to victimhood, even believing they exploit the memory of the Holocaust to malign the German people. There is clearly misplaced anger amongst some in the West German radical left towards the Jews, who are perceived to be blocking the post-war generation's rapprochement with their German identity.

These antisemitic ideas which grew out of German leftists' unresolved issues with their national identity were obscured by their new socialist identity, a self-characterisation designed to suppress their Germanness. Their ideology allowed them to believe that they had overcome the crimes of German history, specifically antisemitism, without having to confront them[70]. Further, as antisemitism was such a central attribute of the Nazi past, any admission or recognition of antisemitism amongst the 68ers would have been at odds with their goal of complete separation from German history and identity. Knödler-Bunte, in his introduction, tells us that until recently, he would have dismissed any accusation that he had not fully processed his relationship to the Holocaust and the Jews on the grounds that he was an "enlightened leftist, who had been born after 1945"[71]. Being born too late to have any personal connection to Nazism and then assuming a new moralistic leftist identity gave Knödler-Bunte and his compatriots a sense of a doubly pure conscience. This was only reinforced by the domestic political climate, where they compared their innocence to the older generation's guilt. With no perceived personal guilt but accepting the collective guilt of their parents, Koenen describes how "one could accumulate a kind of moral capital, even moral superiority"[72]. The moral superiority of their socialist identity was seen as absolute, especially in relation to antisemitism. This was clearly displayed by the left-wing German author Gerhard Zwerenz's

[70] Kundnani, p.92.
[71] Knödler-Bunte, p.33, (translated myself).
[72] Koenen, 'Armed Innocence', p. 30.

article entitled, *Leftist Antisemitism is Impossible* [73]. Rebutting a series of accusations of antisemitism on the part of the left-wing media, he argued that left-wing ideology was simply incompatible with antisemitism and "placing guilt for antisemitism" on a member of the German radical left "is insane."[74]. The West German radical left had successfully created an ideology which they believed not only represented a clean break from Germany's antisemitic past but also placed them beyond any criticism to the contrary.

This is what the *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* contributors recognise as the main driver of the continuation of antisemitism. Their ideology prevented radical leftists from making any progress in working through the issues of their country's recent past and its relationship to Jews; "Nothing was solved, neither our relationship to German history nor to our own confusion"[75]. Rolf Ebert best sums up the central theme of the essays; he does not claim to know how to solve the persistent problem of antisemitism amongst the radical left but concludes that, "As there is no way out in the brutal lack of history, as can be found in the left-wing alternative milieu, the next step can only be to address one's own bias"[76]. Harbouring two conflicting identities, one national and one ideological, those in the West German radical left who retained or developed an antisemitic animus connected to their Germanness were able to dismiss it by virtue of their socialist ideology. This created an environment in which these sentiments could develop and intensify unchecked.

[73] Gerhard Zwerenz, 'Linker Antisemitismus ist Unmöglich', *Die Zeit*, 9. April 1976 <https://www.zeit.de/1976/16/linker-antisemitismus-ist-unmoeglich> [accessed 20 April 2021], np.
[74] Zwerenz, p.9, (translated myself).
[75] 'Vorbemerkung', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, June 1983, p.4, (translated myself).
[76] Rolf Ebert, 'Auf der Suche nach Unbefangenheit', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, June 1983, p. 23, (translated myself).

The relationship between the post-war radical left's identity crisis and antisemitism is paradoxical. Their outrage at the antisemitic atrocities committed by their parents' generation, would see them denounce their connection to the traditional German identity. Yet resentment at not being able to connect to this identity led to anger towards the Jews, who constituted an obstacle to this reconciliation. The 68ers' unquestioning belief that their leftist ideology afforded a clean break from the past meant it did not even occur to them that some of their number could have perpetuated antisemitism. It is important to remember that at the time, both the feeling of wanting to reconnect to their German identity and the feelings of antisemitism amongst some in the radical left were deeply repressed or went unrealised. They were therefore channelled through their leftist ideology, as will be examined in the following chapters.

Chapter 2

Having established that antisemitism could exist among the 68ers, the following chapters will explore how their radical left-wing ideology and practices were used by some in the movement as a basis to articulate and rationalise these ideas. First, I will examine the idea of anti-capitalism. It has already been argued that the 68ers' interpretation of anticapitalism was used to absolve and relativise the German past. This study will supplement this argument, showing how it can also be used to expose antisemitic sentiments among members of the West German radical left.

The 68ers' ideology marginalised the problems of antisemitism by explaining Nazism simply as a consequence of capitalism. The movement adopted a simplified form of the Frankfurt School's critique of capitalism, which the 68ers interpreted as a simple equation of capitalism and fascism[77]. Kundnani points out the clear paradox that this ideology created. By viewing Nazism as an inevitable result of capitalism, the radical left was downplaying the complicity of their parents in the crimes of the Nazis[78]. Directly contradicting the 68ers' stated view of their parents as perpetrators, this ideology could depict them as merely the victims of Nazism and indeed victims of capitalism[79]. Both Kundnani and Herf share the view that this marginalised or even ignored the antisemitism which had been such a distinctive feature of Nazism[80],[81]. This is certainly true, but the link between their anti-capitalist ideology and the Holocaust was even more direct.

[77] Kundnani, p. 28.
[78] Kundnani, p. 18.
[79] Kundnani, p. 18.
[80] Kundnani, p. 18.
[81] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory*, p. 348.

Indeed, the 68ers widely believed the Holocaust itself to be a direct consequence of capitalism, equating the antisemitism of their parents' generation to anticapitalism. A valuable source here comes from Ulrike Meinhof, the radical left journalist and co-founder of the Red Army Faction terrorist group (RAF). In December 1972, already imprisoned, she was summoned as a witness at the trial of fellow RAF member Horst Mahler. In her testimony, she used radical left ideology to argue that the German people should be absolved of their guilt for the Holocaust[82]. The antisemitism underlying the Holocaust in fact represented anti-capitalist sentiment on the part of a German people "longing for communism"[83]. It was the "finance capital and banks", who "diverted the people's hatred of money and exploitation away from themselves and towards the Jews"[84]. To Meinhof, the German people had been misled and their justified anger at capitalism had been redirected by the capitalists towards the Jews. Although Meinhof remained an influential figure in the radical left even after her espousal of terrorism, her statements must be treated with some caution. It can be argued that she represented merely a marginal fringe rather than the 68er movement as a whole. However, her views on the source of antisemitism are similar to those published in the radical left-wing newspaper, *Agit883* in 1969.

In the *Agit 883* article entitled *What is Antisemitism*, the unnamed author states that the article's purpose is to teach his comrades about antisemitism, so that they can rebut accusations that the radical left is antisemitic[85]. The article set out its own chronological narrative of Jewish history

[82] Peter Jochen Winters, 'Ulrike Meinhof läßt sich nur Stichworte geben', *Frankfurter Allgemein Zeitung*, 15th December 1972, p.6.
[83] Winters, p.6, (translated myself).
[84] Winters, p.6, (translated myself).
[85] 'Was ist Antisemitismus', *Agit 883*, 20th November 1969 <http://www.agit883.infopartisan.net> [accessed 20 April 2021] p. 4.

from antiquity until the present day, linking antisemitism to the development of capitalism as early as the late Middle Ages[86]. To explain the Holocaust, the article states that the interwar German petty bourgeoisie's fears of, "being proletarianised by the phase of monopoly capitalism", was redirected into antisemitism in order to reaffirm "the belief in the superiority of their own race"[87]. Much like Meinhof's argument, this article points towards the German people's grievances against the capitalist system as the source of their anger, which was redirected against the Jews. Thus the centrality of anti-capitalism in the radical left not only marginalised antisemitism and the Holocaust, but regarded them as a direct consequence of capitalism.

By combining anti-capitalism with traditional antisemitic tropes, it may be argued that some 68ers rationalised their own antipathy towards Jews. As we have seen in the first section, antisemitic ideas of this kind were passed down to some 68ers by their parents. The prevalence of these stereotypes in the article *What is Antisemitism* suggests that they might have been widespread. What the author believes to be a genuine history of the Jewish people, intended to educate his leftist contemporaries, relies heavily on classic antisemitic stereotypes. It starts by establishing that Jews in the diaspora only remain a distinctive group of people, as opposed to being fully assimilated, due to their "almost 100% uniform economic position"[88]. Indeed, "where they did not maintain this economic position, they were completely assimilated"[89]. The article then goes on to state that this position enjoyed by the Jews was always one of privilege. In antiquity they enjoyed an economically privileged position as traders in luxury goods; the Middle Ages was a "golden era" for the Jews as they became involved in moneylending[90]. He

[86] *Was ist Antisemitismus*, p. 4.
[87] *Was ist Antisemitismus*, p. 4, (translated myself).
[88] *Was ist Antisemitismus*, p. 4, (translated myself).
[89] *Was ist Antisemitismus*, p. 4, (translated myself).
[90] *Was ist Antisemitismus*, p. 4, (translated myself).

goes on to argue that it was the identification of Jews as capitalists during the Weimar Republic which generated hostility towards them from the German people[91]. Indeed, the direct equation of Judaism with social and economic privilege shows that their understanding of the Jewish people was largely based on stereotypes. This is also present in Knödler-Bunte's 'anti-Jewish effect'[92]. Many of the rhetorical questions he asks in this section are based on antisemitic stereotypes, but of specific relevance is when he states that the Jews in interwar Germany made up the "upper class"[93]. Knödler-Bunte goes on to ask, "didn't they, as civil servants, entrepreneurs, business owners and educated citizens bitterly fight the opponents of the Nazis?"[94]. With this he sees the Jews of the Weimar Republic as at least partially responsible for Nazism, on the grounds that they constituted part of the bourgeoisie[95]. Antisemitic stereotypes were not only present in the movement; they could be used in conjunction with anti-capitalist ideas to both rationalise antisemitism and redirect guilt for the Holocaust back towards the Jews.

The prevalence of a radical anti-capitalist ideology which essentially equated capitalism with fascism and the Holocaust had important consequences. Not only would it allow some 68ers to pursue their goal of exonerating their parents' generation; but when coupled with traditional antisemitic tropes, it could also ascribe some guilt for Nazism to the Jews themselves. Anticapitalism would also strongly influence the radical left's anti-imperialist worldview which, as we will now examine, was used to spread the idea that the Jews, specifically the state of Israel, were the heirs of National Socialism.

[91] *Was ist Antisemitismus*, p. 4.
[92] Knödler-Bunte, p. 36.
[93] Knödler-Bunte, p. 36, (translated myself).
[94] Knödler-Bunte, p. 36, (translated myself).
[95] Knödler-Bunte, p. 36.

Chapter 3

"One thing is certain: anti-Semitism, contained in anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism like the storm in the cloud, is again honourable."[96].

This was the observation of Jean Améry's seminal 1969 essay on the West German radical left. The Austrian-Jewish essayist and Auschwitz survivor had supported the student movement. However, he was worried that its growing anti-Zionism was accompanied by a new, unapologetic antisemitism. Although it went unnoticed at the time, his idea that anti-Zionism amounted to thinly-veiled antisemitism would inform much of the historiography. Some like Stein and Broder argue that anti-Zionism is inherently linked to antisemitism, by denying the Jewish state a right to exist, an argument used exclusively against Israel[97]. Reimann sees the 68ers' anti-Zionism as merely consistent with their general political outlook, unconnected with antisemitism; antisemitic violence perpetrated by leftists was an exception[98]. In this section I will show how, whilst anti-Zionism certainly fitted into the radical left's political ideology, Israel was treated differently due to its being a Jewish state.

Another central component of the 68ers' ideology was their anti-imperialist worldview. As the prominent activist Rudi Dutschke wrote in 1964, they developed a third world mentality which perceived the "division of the world into countries rich and poor"[99]. The escalation of the Vietnam war in the mid-1960s intensified this sentiment. The war was seen as a "genocide

[96] Jean Améry, 'Der ehrbare Antisemitismus' Die Zeit, 15 June 1968 <https://www.zeit.de/1969/30/der-ehrbare-antisemitismus/komplettansicht> np., (translated myself).
[97] Stein, p. 37.
[98] Reimann, p. 73.
[99] Rudi Dutschke, 'Disskusion: Das Verhältnis von Theorie und Praxis' in *Subversive Aktion: Der Sinn der Oraganisation ist ihr Scheitern*, ed. Frank Böckelmann and Herbert Nagel (Frankfurt am Mein, 1976), pp. 190-195 (p.192), (translated myself).

emanating from imperialist political and economic interests" and taken as proof of the moral bankruptcy of the western capitalist powers, which included the FRG alongside the USA[100]. As a result, the West German radical left had developed a black and white worldview[101]. On the one side they saw the imperialist western powers, led by America; on the other, they saw the Third World fighting for liberation.

The Vietnam protests starting in 1966 saw frequent comparisons made between the US and the Third Reich. The 68ers' simplistic connection between capitalism and fascism, allowed them to label any capitalist state as fascist. In November 1966 the *New York Times* reported on posters on the walls of the Dachau concentration camp, stating "Vietnam is the Auschwitz of America" and "American leathernecks are inhumane murderers like the SS"[102]. These posters were not an isolated incident. *Agit883* contains articles with similar ideas, such as one titled *USA-SA-SS*, a popular chant at West German Vietnam rallies[103]. The SA and SS refer to the 'Sturmabteilung' and 'Schutzstaffel', two Nazi military corps. The article argues that the genocidal war in Vietnam is the result of America's history and national character, which had made its people genocidal and fascist[104]. This argument is analogous to how some 68ers viewed their own country's history. Though similar sentiments were expressed by far-left protesters in other countries, in West Germany they had a very specific meaning.

[100] Reimann, p. 72.
[101] Haury, pp. 138- 139.
[102] 'Anti-U.S. Posters at Dachau', *The New York Times*, 8 Novemeber 1966, <https://www.nytimes.com/1966/11/08/archives/antius-posters-at-dachau.html> [accessed 20 April 2021], p. 18.
[103] B. K., 'USA-SA-SS', *Agit 833*, 4 December 1969 < http://www.agit883.infopartisan.net> [accessed 20 April 1969], p. 8.
[104] B. K., p. 8.

The frequent equation of their political rivals to the Third Reich served to relativise and therefore exonerate Germany's specific history. Broder argues that post-war German society in general suffered from an "Auschwitz Complex"[105]. He describes this as a form of national embarrassment that the Germans alone had "tried to solve the Jewish question once and for all", through Auschwitz[106]. This resulted in the "German problem", of "constantly looking for evidence that others are even worse"[107]. Through frequent comparisons of the US in Vietnam to the Nazis, the 68ers could "universalise the specifically German phenomenon of National Socialism and normalise Germany"[108]. This allowed them to solve the problem of the 'Auschwitz Complex'. Indeed, Greiner notes a similar phenomenon across the German media following the 1969 My Lai massacre, stating that this was one of the few instances where "the protest movement shared common ground with the mainstreamers"[109]. The 68ers had therefore developed a tendency to accuse countries of being fascist in an attempt to normalise German history. This would have more complex implications when used against Israel after 1967.

This hostile stance towards Israel resulted from an anti-imperialist worldview which was not in itself antisemitic. The Six Day War in June 1967 saw a decisive shift amongst the 68ers, from support for Israel to outspoken anti-Zionism[110]. With the outbreak of the Six Day War, Israel's connection to the US was exposed and its place in the US imperialist camp confirmed[111]. The rapidity and decisiveness of this shift is explained by Herf and Reimann as motivated by a febrile political atmosphere in West Germany. On 2nd June Benno Ohnesorg, a student

[105] Broder, *Ewige Antisemite* p. 13, (translated myself).
[106] Broder, *Ewige Antisemite* p. 13, (translated myself).
[107] Broder, *Ewige Antisemite*, pp. 125- 126, (translated myself).
[108] Kundnani, p. 92.
[109] Bernd Greiner, 'Saigon, Nuremberg, and the West German Image of America in the Late 1960s', in *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German Encounter with American Culture after 1945*, ed. Alexander Stephan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004) pp. 51-63 (p. 56).
[110] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 76.
[111] Kloke, *Israel Kritik*, p. 80.

attending a demonstration against the visit by the Shah of Iran, was fatally shot by a policeman. The violence had a profound impact on the 68ers, reinforcing the idea that the West German government was indeed fascist[112]. Further, as both the FRG and Iran were US allies, it underpinned the idea of a US imperialist front[113]. The Six Day War broke out just three days after Ohnesorg's shooting, against this background of acute political tension. Israel's perceived affiliation to the US made the country a natural object of the 68ers' hostility.

However, this hostility went beyond Israel's association with the western imperialist bloc; it was intensified by Israel's identity as a Jewish state. Whilst the Vietnam war was still on the agenda, Israel increasingly became the focus of 68er criticism[114]. Historians have identified different sources for this conspicuous interest in the Middle East, such as closer geographic proximity to Germany and particular empathy for the Palestinians' political and spiritual homelessness, something the 68ers could identify with[115]. Yet the focus on Israel was not just incidental, but forcefully advocated by leading figures on the radical left. One such figure was Dieter Kunzelmann, a founding member of Kommune 1 (K1). In 1969 he travelled to a Palestinian training camp, as had many leading leftists[116]. In that year, *Agit883* would publish his *Letter from Amman*. In it, he argues that the West German left should focus on the Palestinian cause, writing that, "One thing is clear: Palestine is for the FRG and Europe what Vietnam is to the Americans"[117]. His reasoning is the "Judenknax", which he explains as a "hang-up" about the Jews; "We [the Germans] gassed six million Jews. The Jews are called

[112] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 77.
[113] Reimann, p. 73.
[114] Kundnani, p.89.
[115] Veron, p. 63.
[116] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 98-99.
[117] Dieter Kunzelmann, 'Brief Aus Amman', *Agit 883*, November 1969 <http://www.agit883.infopartisan.net> [accessed 20 April 2021], p. 5, (translated myself).

Israelis now. Those who fight fascism support Israel"[118]. He argued that this was preventing the Germans from recognising the "fascist ideology of Zionism" and the Israelis as the Nazis of today[119]. Anti-Zionism was important because by opposing the Jewish state, the Germans could overcome their hang up about the Jews. In this way anti-Zionism was used to redefine the process of overcoming the German past.

By the time the letter was published, Kunzelmann had formed a terrorist group in West Germany and had become virulently antisemitic, though this was unknown at the time[120]. More important is that the ideas he discussed in the letter were readily accepted across the 68er movement and published in the leftist press. Rolf Ebert in his essay for *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, writes that he used to think, "overcoming our German history consists in solidarity with the Palestinians"[121]. He now recognises that this was "just antisemitism turned on its head"[122]. According to Broder this was in fact a common argument among the West German radical left[123]; anti-Zionism offered the opportunity to identify the "guilty Jews as compensation to the innocent victims [of the Holocaust]"[124]. For many in the radical left, opposition to Israel was not just because of its association with western imperialism, but specifically because it was a Jewish state.

This focus on Israel was also visible in the intensity with which the 68ers equated it to the Third Reich. As we have seen this rhetoric was employed to relativise German history, the

[118] Kunzelmann, *Brief Aus Amman*, Nov. 1969, p. 5, (translated myself).
[119] Kunzelmann, *Brief Aus Amman*, Nov. 1969, p. 5, (translated myself).
[120] Kraushaar, p. 292.
[121] Ebert, p. 22, (translated myself).
[122] Ebert, p. 22, (translated myself).
[123] Broder, *Ewige Antisemit*, p. 126
[124] Broder, *Ewige Antisemit*, p. 130, (translated myself).

Jewish state, by symbolising the victims of that history made a compelling target. As made clear by Kunzelmann in his letter, the German people needed to recognise that Zionism was a fascist ideology in order to overcome their complex about the Jews[125]. As Broder explains, "the Jews or the Zionists take the place of the original fascists or Nazis, who slowly disappear from the picture"[126]. As a result, the Jewish state was compared to the Third Reich not despite the Holocaust but because of it. In 1967 the SDS, a core institution of the 68er movement, organised a 'tribunal' of the Axel Springer publishing group, whose right-leaning newspapers were critical of the 68er movement and supportive of Israel. In this mock trial, the SDS used a student-master analogy to describe the Middle East conflict, in which the Jews, "appear as the students who have learnt from the persecutor, the persecution itself as the successfully completed education"[127]. In equating Israel to fascism, the radical left was knowingly accusing a country, a substantial proportion of whose population were Holocaust survivors, of Nazism. To many 68ers, "the Jews became the new Nazis"[128]. Stein argues that, "hardly any other state has been accused of fascism by the [West German] left, ... as often and so consistently as Israel"[129]. To Kloke these comparisons had been the end goal of the 68ers, writing, "at the end of this process was the longed-for equation Zionism = fascism"[130]. The obsessive nature with which the radical left compared Israel and the conflict in the Middle East to the Third Reich and the Holocaust was a form of thinly veiled antisemitism, motivated by a desire to relieve their own guilt.

[125] Kunzelmann, Brief Aus Amman, Nov. 1969, p. 5.
[126] Broder, *Ewige Antisemit*, p. 283, (translated myself).
[127] quoted in, Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 86.
[128] Fine and Spencer, p. 62.
[129] Stein, p. 187.

[130] Martin Kloke, *Israel und die Deutsche Linke: Zur Geschichte eines schwierigen Verhältnisses* (Hanau: Haag + Herchen Verlag, 1994) p. 187, (translated myself).

It is clear that the 68ers' anti-Zionism was a direct consequence of their anti-imperialist worldview. When applied to the Middle East, this Manichean dichotomy between Western capitalist imperialists and the Third World naturally painted Israel as the radical left's enemy. However, to many 68ers this provided an opportunity to escape their German guilt. Israel attracted a disproportionate level of criticism, including comparisons with the Nazis, because it was a Jewish state.

Chapter 4

The period which is the subject of this study was bookended by occurrences of anti-Jewish violence carried out by militant factions of the West German radical left, beginning with the attempted bombing of a Jewish community centre in West Berlin in 1969 and ending with the Entebbe hijacking and subsequent attacks on Jewish targets in Germany in 1976. These attacks were justified as anti-Zionist and therefore anti-fascist, clearly regarding all Jews as complicit in Zionism. This chapter will argue that this antisemitic idea was more prevalent amongst the 68ers than often thought.

Israel's association with Western imperialism led some 68ers to form exaggerated and antisemitic views of Zionism, which they then applied to all Jews. By seeing the diaspora as a Zionist network, parts of the West German radical left soon came to view all Jews as Zionist agents and therefore the enemy. In a second *Letter from Amman* published in *Agit883*, Kunzelmann clarifies this association. He writes, "the Jewish diaspora in the whole world insofar as it is Zionist (and where is it not) is beating the drum [of Zionism]"[131]. With this, he is equating Judaism to enthusiastic support for Zionism. Thomas has pointed out the clear similarity between the radical left's identification of Israel as part of a global imperialist conspiracy and the "paranoia that informed Nazi antisemitism"[132]. We find such conspiratorial ideas in Knödler-Bunte's essay, where he questions the motives of American Jews, "who with lots of money and even more influential power unconditionally support Israel, not matter how barbaric it is"[133]. Further, Koenen writes how Zionism came to be seen as the central antagonist in the anti-imperialistist struggle. He describes that in his own mind and those of this fellow

[131] Dieter Kunzelmann, 'Brief aus Amman', *Agit 883*, 3 April 1970 <http://www.agit883.infopartisan.net> [accessed 20 April 2021], p. 11, (translated myself).
[132] Nick Thomas, *Protest movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003) pp. 211-212
[133] Knödler-Bunte, p. 36.

68ers, Zionism appeared as "the stature of an invisible, gigantic force operating worldwide"[134]. He admits that "it was not always clear whether it was merely an instrument of imperialism or in fact its actual power centre and secret spiritus rector"[135]. As a member of the SDS, Koenen's statement shows us that this obsession with Zionism as a global conspiracy was present in one of the 68ers' leading institutions. It is clear that for many in the radical left, anti-Zionism was not just equivalent to the anti-imperialism they applied to other Western powers but also informed heavily by antisemitic stereotypes.

It was this identification of all Jews as Zionists which motivated the militant fringes of the radical left to attack Jewish targets. Whilst these groups may not be representative of the movement as a whole, historians like Herf and Jander point out that these terrorists were in the midst of the West German radical left scene[136] and their acts often reflected the 68ers' social discourse[137]. This study will take a different approach to validate these statements, examining the reaction of the wider 68er movement to these events, rather than focusing on the acts and perpetrators themselves.

In 1969, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, there was an attempted bombing of a Jewish community centre in West Berlin, where a commemoration was being held. Although the bomb failed to detonate (it was discovered the following morning), a leaflet taking responsibility for the attack had been distributed during a lecture at the Republikanischer Club.

[134] Gerd Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt: Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution 1967 -1977* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002) p. 179, (translated myself).
[135] Koenen, *Rote Jahrzent*, p.179, (translated myself).
[136] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 327.
[137] Martin Jander, 'German Leftist Terrorism and Israel: Ethno-Nationalist, Religious-Fundamentalist, or Social-Revolutionary?', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 38:6, 456-477, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2015.1006451, p. 474.

As its title, *Schalom+ Napalm* suggests, the leaflet justified its attack citing Israel's connection to US imperialism, Napalm being a weapon synonymous with the Vietnam war[138]. It also drew comparisons between Zionism and Nazism, stating "the Kristallnacht of 1938 is carried out daily by the Zionists in the occupied territories"[139]. This leaflet was reprinted in an issue of *Agit883* soon after the attack. What is significant is that *Agit883* offered no commentary on the leaflet, neither condemning its antisemitic material nor the attempted attack on innocent Jewish Berliners. The page also includes a press release from the Republikanischer Club, confirming they had nothing to do with the leaflet nor the attack. They do state that "Bombs in Jewish community centres ... are not suitable means to point out the development of fascism in Israel"[140]. In the same sentence they nonetheless voiced their support for the cause. Further, the final paragraph of the press release is dedicated to articulating this support, stating: "However, we believe that the West German left must finally counter the false alternative 'guarantee of the existence of the Zionist state or the destruction of the Israelis' constructed by the West German propaganda with a consistent anti-imperialist strategy"[141]. This statement by a leading radical left organisation focuses less on condemning the terrorism than on condoning its purported motives.

The second major event was the hijacking of an Air France flight from Tel Aviv in the summer of 1976. The hijackers included members of a Palestinian terrorist organisation and two West Germans, Wilfried Böse and Brigitte Kuhlmann, members of the Revolutionary Cells terror group. The flight was diverted to Entebbe, with the support of the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin.

[138] Schwarze Ratten TW, 'Schalom + Napalm', *Agit883*, 13 November 1969 < http://www.agit883.infopartisan.net> [accessed 20 April 1969], p. 9.
[139] Schwarze Ratten TW, p. 9, (translated myself).
[140] Republikanischer Club, 'Die Bombe: Presseerklärung', *Agit883*, 13 November 1969 <http://www.agit883.infopartisan.net> [accessed 20 April 1969], p. 9, (translated myself).
[141] Republikanischer Club, p. 9, (translated myself).

The event had a significant impact on the West German radical left. Some, including the future foreign minister Joschka Fischer, who had known Böse personally, became disillusioned with the movement. Fischer later told his biographer that he found the parallels between the segregation of the Jewish passengers from the non-Jews (who were released) and the Holocaust particularly troubling[142]. To him this showed "how those who emphatically set themselves apart from National Socialism and its crimes had almost compulsively repeated the crimes of the Nazis"[143]. Fischer engaged in heated debates with fellow 68ers, who criticised the Israeli rescue mission rather than the hijackers[144]. Broder was incredulous that his erstwhile leftist comrades should object less to the hijacking than to the rescue, "criticised by the West German left as a violation of Uganda's sovereignty"[145]. Further, he remembers that "the various left groups sent telegrams of condolence to Idi Amin and condemned this act of Israeli piracy"[146]. Amin's antisemitic views and idealisation of Hitler were well known[147]. Talking about Böse and Kuhlmann, Herf writes that, "in working with Amin in Entebbe, the distinction between anti-Zionism and hatred of the Jews – anti-Semitism – vanished"[148]. The same can be argued for those 68ers who were not just marginalising the act of antisemitic terrorism in favour of finding a way to criticise Israel, but supporting a brutal dictator and known admirer of Hitler.

It is clear that parts of the West German radical left saw Zionism not simply as a form of imperialism - indeed of fascism - but as a global conspiracy in which all Jews were complicit.

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[142] Sibyelle Krause-Burger, *Joschka Fischer: Der Marsch durch die Illusionen* (Stuttgard: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1997) p. 110, (translated myself).
[143] Krause-Burger, p.110, (translated myself).
[144] Krause-Burger, p.110.
[145] Dollinger & Broder, p. 3, (translated myself).
[146] Dollinger & Broder, p. 3, (translated myself).
[147] 'Amin Says War Confirms his View on Hitler and the Jews', *New York Times*, 11 October 1973 <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/10/11/archives/amin-says-war-confirms-his-view-on-hitler-and-jews.html > [accessed 20 April 2021], p. 19.
[148] Herf, *Undeclared Wars*, p. 319.

Conclusion

This dissertation has sought to illuminate a neglected area of the historiography, giving a more detailed account of antisemitism amongst the West German 68er generation. Exploring both the sources of this antisemitism and how it was rationalised and expressed, this study has come to three key conclusions.

First, the paradoxical relationship between the 68ers' identity crisis and their view of Jewish people has been analysed. The renouncement of their national identity led to a misplaced resentment amongst some 68ers towards Jews. As victims of Nazism, they represented living reminders of Germany's past crimes and were therefore perceived as standing in the way of reconciliation. This resentment often went unrealised because by identifying themselves as radical leftists, the 68ers implicitly felt they must therefore be incapable of antisemitism. However, closer analysis reveals that the 68ers' conscious identification with their new, global leftist identity combined with a desire - often at a subconscious level - to reconnect to their German national identity could foster antisemitic sentiments and allow these to develop unchecked.

Second, this dissertation has sought to uncover the important role that classic antisemitic stereotypes continued to play in the thinking of many 68ers and how these could be incorporated into their radical leftist ideology. Chapter 1 demonstrates that antisemitism could be passed down from the wartime generation to the 68ers and internalised by some notwithstanding the radical left beliefs they later embraced. Chapter 2 shows how traditional antisemitic tropes seeped into the 68ers' critique of capitalism, as illustrated in *Agit 883's* article on Jewish history. Coupling the belief that fascism was a direct consequence of

capitalism with preconceptions of the Jew as archetypal capitalist allowed some to argue that the Jews were at least partially responsible for the Holocaust. Chapter 4 goes on to show how 68ers' hostility to Israel could stray further into antisemitism, describing how many thought of Zionism in terms of the classic trope of a global Jewish conspiracy; this was used by some to justify, or at least sympathise with, violent attacks on Jews carried out by extreme elements of the radical left.

Lastly, the aim of much of this antisemitism, seems to have been to exonerate Germanies past. The use of anti-capitalist ideas allowed some to argue that guilt for the Holocaust should lie partially with the Jews themselves. Similarly, for many 68ers, equating Zionism to Nazism, with Jews as perpetrators rather than victims, was a way to address their unease relating to Germany's Nazi past. Through such actions some in the radical left sought to overcome the German past not through reconciliation with the Jewish people, but through renewed hostility.

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