

NEW GERMAN GHETTO SHOW (1960)

For two months now the writing desks of newspapers, publishers, scientists, politicians, and even unionists have been graced with a new example of the authoritarian thinking and ghetto mentality of this western republic of the German nation. The people being targeted this time are not members of the Polish intelligentsia, or Jews, or even half-hearted or partial Communists; this time they are the skeptics who oppose the nuclear politics of the Federal Republic, people who maintain their positions even when these are shared by the extreme Left, people who find the issue itself more important than the world views of many of its proponents. In September 1957, the journalist Winfried Martini for the *Rheinischer Merkur*¹ published melancholic meditations on the role played by our intellectuals in politics. Clearly underlying this text was the thesis of his book *Das Ende aller Sicherheit*, where he advocates getting rid of democracy, an act which he labels "political freedom," and calls for the establishment of an authoritarian class-based rule of law along the lines of the regime of Salazar, the Portuguese dictator who "lives according to the strictly spiritual discipline of Thomism." They used to warn us about intellectuals whose statements conform too closely to government directives and they turned the scientist's proverbial unworldliness into a virtue; now the warnings of the Göttingen 18 have been dismissed as a scholarly gaffe.² *The Red Book (Rotbuch)*, published in 1960 by a

committee that calls itself “Save the Peace”—a book that landed on our writing desk—takes a first stab at listing those public personas in the Federal Republic whom these saviors of peace consider suspicious; while this list “in no way reflects the qualifications of those who have signed it,” and while it only contains a “miniscule number of Communists,” the fact remains that wherever these names come up—on petitions, appeals, or invitations to participate in events or conferences—“it is wise to find out whether they may be serving as a front for Communist culture functionaries or other clandestine organizations” (p. 136–137).³

Here I find it useful to recall that McCarthy was the head of a Senate Committee “for the investigation of un-American activities;” only about ten people were ever arrested, but hundreds and thousands were on those dreaded lists that broadcasters, the press, associations, organizations, and high government agencies were plied with and which caused manuscripts to be refused, promotions to be blocked, all free discussion of America’s internal and external policies to be cut short, and the democratic climate in the US to be completely poisoned. The “brag list” produced by the “Save the Peace” club thus hooks into the worst traditions of a friendly country, and is published by a committee whose name would lead one to expect that it would cauterize these points of contact rather than prepare a comeback for them on German soil.

This *Rotbuch* is more than a monstrous index prepared by a few professional Communist-haters. Its political inspiration is all too close to the interventions perpetrated by our government in the East-West discussions and in the bills being prepared by the Ministry of the Interior to curtail our sovereignty. Even if this particular club were to close down—which is exactly what we hope will

occur—its founders and supporters remain ministers in the Adenauer cabinet.

The press, broadcasting and publishing networks, unions, the military, peace movements and anti-nuclear campaigns, the “culture section” of the parties and their youth organizations have all been combed for information on the political views and curricula of their members, and where data were missing the blanks have been filled in with speculations designed to reveal the relationship between freely proclaimed opinion on the one hand and the Pankow doctrine⁴ on the other—reflecting negatively on both—the purpose being to solve the problem of democratic opposition in the Federal Republic once and for all. The book seeks to “unmask the Communist infiltration,” which thrives on the “naïveté” and “ignorance” of its “victims” (p. 8); it wants to help in the struggle for victory in the Cold War, for “should we lose it, a hot war will inevitably break out upon us,” and it wants greater recognition for the important role played by “the infiltration sector as a determining front in our democracy’s political defense system” (p. 7–8).

The book offers a pellucid picture of its underlying concept of western class-based government, and a closer look at the meaning of its content is quite frightening; but it also makes possible a clear position in the face of a wolf who has already shed his sheepskin and is about to bite.

The vocabulary is militant, reminiscent of the jargon of the Freikorps⁵ after the First World War; this is just an external feature, but frightening enough after the experience we acquired in that department and the innocence we bitterly forfeited. The attitude is fundamentally elitist; it starts with the minister of the interior resorting to a theory that has always served openly fascist countries

as an irrational justification for implementing illegitimate claims to power, an approach that we actually see in use here. For who can have authorized the publishers of this book to accuse hundreds of professors, journalists, unionists, broadcasters, students, and young people of being ignorant or naive in the face of a phenomenon that these people in particular have focused on for years? It is this “group” of “chosen individuals” who feel they are responding to the “call” for a “common ideal.”⁶ And their thinking is reminiscent of Stuckart/Globke’s commentaries on race.⁷ Moreover, their wanting to win the Cold War rather than ending it as quickly as possible through bilateral agreements means wanting to drag it out—but how much longer? How much more time is required for the spirit that “called upon” the publishers of this book before they turn the extended arm of the Cold War into a fuse for a hot war, and bring the diabolical game of the past to its end, its final closing?

And so they take their stand: militant, if not militaristic; with elitist, if not anti-democratic attitudes; as determined cold warriors if not challengers demanding a preventative war against the GDR⁸ and the Soviet Union, à la Herr Schlamm.⁹

The material is organized according to this perspective. Every chapter has an introduction that is meant to focus, or rather blur, the reader’s understanding of how seriously our freedom is being threatened. It pillories professors whose students proudly proclaim to have attended their classes; it attacks writers who have become known as “the few great ones” since Thomas Mann and Musil, as well as painters, sculptors, and composers whose names belong in the repertoire of the educated class in Germany—however little this class knows about these artists.

“The main arena of this Cold War” is allegedly public opinion, and it is allegedly the objective of Communist agitators to undermine, pervert, and confuse the public (p. 10). The publications helping to do this dirty work range from the *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* to *konkret*, and from the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to the *Frankfurter Rundschau* to *Diskus*.¹⁰ Anyone who voices a protest against arms buildup or argues for the freedom of speech is deemed to be acting within a fifth column. Open opposition is not viewed as a demonstration of our democratic rights, even duties; instead, it is perceived as belonging to the realm of deliberate obfuscation and perversion.

Under the heading “Subverting the West Germans’ Will to Defense” (sic!) every possible attitude critical of the *Bundeswehr*¹¹ is ascribed to East Berlin agit-prop; there are references to the “fuss about generation 22” (p. 28); differences in opinion on international and national politics are shrugged off as having been “deliberately created” (p. 93), while the rejection of military and other traditional associations (in particular Verband deutscher Soldaten and Stahlhelm und Kyffhäuser)¹² is judged to be part of the category entitled “Subverting Defensive Thought”! (p. 94).

Anyone who fights for peace “is—wittingly or unwittingly—someone who fights for world revolution,” since the “peace slogan” simply conceals a “deliberate deception” of gigantically Leninist provenance, as those suffering from naïveté soon learn (p. 102). And in line with the dishonesty of the supposed initiators of the West German “peace movement,” the motives of the professors and teachers connected to this movement derive from attitudes that use “oppositional grandstanding” to compensate for the “lack of public attention they garner in their professional work” (p. 3).

Absolutely no one and nothing escapes censure: political parties, churches, and universities are rated failures by these “saviors of peace.” Members of the *Bundestag*—Helmuth Kallbitzer, Helene Wessel, Arno Behrisch, and Peter Nellen—Association of German Students, the Socialist Student Association, the Falken, the Union of German Public Employees, the Association of German Unions, Association of German Catholic Youth, the Protestant Youth of Germany, the teacher-training colleges, the Further Education Centers, the Church-led community centers, the British Member of Parliament Conny Cillacus, the church representative Kloppenburg, and the former representative of the Protestant Church in the GDR Probst Grüber—all of these people, and many more, their numbers are legion—are labeled with stereotyped vocabulary such as “infiltrated with Communist ideas, suspicious, untrustworthy, susceptible,” and so on.

In the spring of 1957, eighteen German physicists published a manifesto in which they warned against the Federal Republic participating in the nuclear arms race and announced they would not take part in nuclear arms production in Germany. The West German public was shocked at Mr. Adenauer’s condescending response that judged the political warning issued by these eighteen German scientists to be incompetent and unnecessary, and sought to expunge it from the arena of German political discussion. This response revealed a new lack of respect for scholarship and a disregard for the lively pluralist democratic life that had supposedly been guaranteed when a parliamentary democracy was established after 1945. Media reactions followed, from people such as Herr Winfried Martini, mentioned above, and included even more aggressive reactions from the local Christian Democ-

rat press. For instance, in the summer of 1958, when students and teachers went out into the streets to publicly proclaim their opposition to nuclear rearmament in the Federal Republic, a daily newspaper in Münster wrote, "Don't believe the slogans of those . . . who are willing to abandon you and their family, their beliefs and their freedom, their existence and their future to the dictatorship of Bolshevism. Give these people the answer they deserve: rejection and calumny." This was directed at the local committee "Fight Nuclear Death," which had been co-founded by professors at the university. This persecution of heretics spread through the local papers of all the federal German lands, while the big daily papers remained silent, hardly mentioning the protests of hundreds of thousands of citizens or describing the anti-nuclear movement as a motley group of isolated sectarians without influence. Two methods were mobilized toward the same end. When neither one worked, and when the Standing Committee for the Assembly of all Opponents of Nuclear Rearmament was created in Gelsenkirchen, Mr. Schröder pulled out all the stops and called upon the *Bundestag* to engage in a witch hunt and inquisition—not in order to pursue enemies of the Constitution, but to silence and eliminate democrats and opponents of nuclear arms.

Ideas prepared in the press and broadcasting were then formulated in the highest places in the *Bundestag*; at the same time the law prohibiting referenda on nuclear rearmament was passed. Voters were thus deprived of having a say on a question of life and death in German politics, and their representatives had the choice of behaving like obedient and diligent little bourgeois citizens (*sine ira et studio*) or suffering threats as a result of ministerial inter-

ventions both on the job and when exercising their rights to free speech.

The third phase has now set in with this *Rotbuch* from the "Save the Freedom" committee that lists the names of its victims in neat alphabetic order over pages and pages, mingling the living with the dead, annulling their anonymity, and opening a new German ghetto show. The "meditation" on the political role of the intellectual in our country has become an invitation to a pogrom; individual voices of warning have become grand inquisitors of the Christian Democrat persuasion; saviors of freedom have shown their true colors as pioneers of a new German fascism.

The system is clear, and quite hideous. But this is not yet enough. The opposition has accumulated facts that cannot be neutralized without the use of force. And so, when there is no proof of subversive contacts, the last resort is to take offensive action in the media, and publish lies and crass falsehoods. The *Rotbuch* even goes so stupidly far as to repeat libelous assertions that the federal government's *Bulletin* already had to deny earlier, and thus offers the reader such a plethora of naked untruths that it destroys even a potential willingness to believe what is in the book. The screw has been turned too far, the attack parried. Legal actions are coming on hard and fast; Jesko von Puttkammer¹³ procured a court order from the federal prosecutor, and word has it that the club is breaking up.

But this is not the first such case. Which is not just an innocuous fact. Let us recall that when the fuss over the Lex Soraya¹⁴ died down, Herr Schäffer's¹⁵ much worse Law on the Protection of Honor appeared; when the anger over Herr Schröder's 1958 Emergency Laws in Stuttgart seemed to have evaporated, he

pushed for an Emergency Service Law—in other words, a law instituting a German territorial army. We do not yet know what kinds of changes in the Constitution will come out of this *Rotbuch* that was put together by a disgraced committee, whose founding members are to this day cabinet ministers in the Adenauer government, ministers who are planning measures to tap telephones and censor mail; ministers who have initiated the production of West German rockets; ministers who want to mobilize the *Bundeswehr* against striking workers; ministers who continue to push for the nuclear rearmament of the *Bundeswehr* at a time of worldwide détente; ministers who proclaim the “liberation” of the German East; ministers who demand the death penalty for traitors.

We are not ready to believe that Bonn is planning a “Blitzkrieg” against the GDR although recognizing that something is unreasonable does not necessarily mean it will not happen. There has already been a time in Germany when people thought “This can’t be true,” and it was true, and cost millions of them their lives. Clearly, this must not happen; clearly, the political tendencies of the Federal Republic today justify every kind of fear; clearly, in this situation optimism is the reserve of fools, and all those who feel the suspicion, the mistrust, and the discomfort of the moment must come together in order to prevent what happened in the past from happening again. They say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and we hardly need proof that prevention is what is required today.

NOTES

1. The *Rheinischer Merkur* is a conservative Christian weekly newspaper founded in 1945 by journalist Franz Albert Kramer (1900–1950). The first edition was published March 16, 1946 in Koblenz.
2. This was a group of eighteen West German nuclear scientists who published an anti-nuclear weapons manifesto on April 12, 1957. The text of the “Göttinger Erklärung der 18 Atomwissenschaftler” was published in *Vaterland. Muttersprache* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1994), p. 139.
3. *The Red Book* was published in spring 1960. It contained the names of 452 university teachers, writers and artists, among them Wolfgang Abendroth, Max Born, Otto Dix, Werner Egk, Ida Ehre, Leonhard Frank, Willi Geiger, Albrecht Goes, Helmut Gollwitzer, Karl Hubbuch, Hans Henny Jahn, Erich Kästner, Wolfgang Koeppen, Peter Lühr, Alfred von Martin, Martin Niemöller, Carl Orff, Otto Pankow, Hans Purrmann, Franz Radziwill, Ernst Rowohlt, Luis Trenker, Fritz von Unruh, Wilhelm Wagenfeld, Alfred Weber, and Günther Weissenborn. They were suspected of being “Communist culture workers” and presented as employees of Moscow. The Committee “Save the Freedom” was founded by the ultra-conservative Franz Josef Strauss and Christian Democratic member of the *Bundestag* Rainer Barzel (1924–2006).
4. Pankow is a neighborhood of Berlin formerly in the Soviet zone, and here alludes to the Government of East Germany, many of whose key offices were located in Pankow.
5. Freikorps are paramilitary groups of former soldiers returning from the First World War.
6. Gerhard Schröder (1910–1989) was a member of the conservative Christian Democratic Union, Foreign Minister from 1961 to 1966, and Minister of Defense from 1966 to 1969.
7. Wilhelm Stuckart (1902–1953) had been a National Socialist politician, and Hans Globke (1898–1973) wrote the official commentary on the Reich Citizenship Law (Nuremberg Laws). Despite his Nazi past, Globke was for many years the director of the Federal Chancellery under Adenauer.
8. GDR is the German Democratic Republic in East Germany.
9. William S. Schlamm (1904–1978) was a conservative, anti-Communist commentator in *Die Welt*.
10. These are newspapers or journals, which range from far left on the political spectrum, e.g. *konkret*, to liberal or center-left, e.g., the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.
11. *Bundeswehr* is the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany.
12. The *Verband deutscher Soldaten*, the Association of German Soldiers, is a vestigial veterans’ organization from the time of the German Kaiser (emperor), with nationalist sympathies. The *Stahlhelm*—steel helmet—is a metonymical reference to the pre-1945 German military. The *Kyffhäuser* is the mountain on which there is a famous memorial to the iconic German Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa (1122–1190).
13. Jesko von Puttkammer was head editor of the social democratic *Vorwärts*; he later became the ambassador to Israel, Yugoslavia, and other countries.

14. The Lex Soraya, an innovation in the penal code, set out to punish reports on the private lives of foreign heads of state. It was quickly approved by the federal cabinet under pressure from the Shah of Iran, but was defeated in the *Bundestag*.
15. In his period as Minister of Justice (1957–1961) and as part of his “Great Legal Reform,” Fritz Schäffer (1888–1967, CSU) designed several projects on the “Protection of Honor.” In other words, this conservative agenda attempted to turn printing or telling the truth about somebody into a crime, if that truth was deemed to be an intrusion into the person’s private sphere. Anyone convicted of the crime of “publicly discussing the private affairs of strangers” was to be incarcerated for two years. The move was directed primarily against the press and was meant to suppress reports “without regard to the truth or untruth of the statement. No proof regarding the truth of the statement may be brought.”