

Antifa Today in Munich Germany



**Interviews and Observations From
Munich Anti-Fascist Political Parties
(October 2023 - March 2024)**

Willow

Dedicated to my Antifascist Friends

**Thank You
Isabelle Ann LaFontaine Whittall
for Editing my Words**

“...when I’m old, I owe it to the young people to be on the right side of history. I need to know, I need them to know, that I did the right thing and I fought for what I believed in. ... What’s the point of living if you do not surround your whole life with what you believe in?” - *Nora, Munich Communist, A Dear Friend*

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Marat Introduction

October 2023 through March 2024, I was studying sociology at Ludwig Maxillian University in Munich, Germany. Desperately craving the punk music and atmosphere of my home city of Vancouver, Canada, I searched for my people, my place. In the spiritual basement of Munich, somewhere between Imprelstrasse and Pocistrasse on the U6 train line, I found my haven. Marat music and restaurant. A DIY music venue and arts community center with a stinking smell of Bullet Farm, Black Lab nostalgia. The music was loud, the drinks cheap, the people kind and authentic. A militant expression was present amongst most of the goers here: shaved heads, black leather, big boots. German grunge punk goth rock and roll metal snobs. The décor was graffiti and sticker vomit, with a mural of Calvin and Hobbes in the smoking area outside. Marat grew closer to my heart as I made friends and frequented the venue during my time in Munich. In the depths of a mosh pit there I met my good friend Oliver Colores, which immediate initiated the creation of our music magazine Castaway Creatives.

Marat is a reference to French revolutionary activist Jean Paul-Marat. The word Marat also refers to a class of men in the former



Soviet Republic. The people and presence of Marat was radically political. Radical at least in the perspective of Western politics. Marat was an autonomous anti-fascist sanctuary, a community center for antifascist political parties to organize. Through this introduction I became close with people involved in anti-fascism. In Munich today, antifa is divided into Communist and Anarchist parties, often unorganized, and dysfunctional. However, those involved in this fight are pure at heart, fighting for what they believe in. At home in Vancouver Canada, we must learn to unite against the greater evil of fascism, to utilize community spaces for political organization, educate each other on the politics of our society, believe in ourselves, form a political party, destroy fascism through the grind of democracy; by supporting community leaders in electable positions, electing our own school board, parks board, city council, destroying fascism, because we owe it to the future and to ourselves, to fight for the change we want to see in the world.

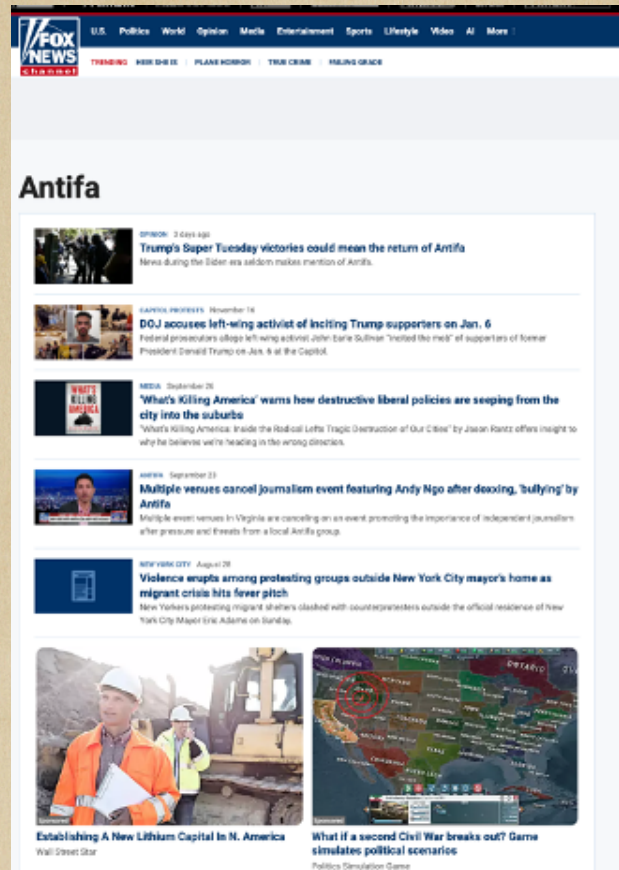


**Modern Major News
Coverage of “Antifa”**

Fox News Terrorists

The word “antifa” has been used tactically by major news outlets in the United States to pursue an agenda of division and political theatre. Fox News is especially guilty of coining the term antifa with the goal of fear mongering. As of March 11th, 2024, Fox News has an “Antifa” category under the crime section of their website, with articles tilted...

“Trump’s Super Tuesday victories could mean the return of Antifa,” and “What’s killing America’ warns how destructive liberal policies are sweeping from the city into the suburbs.”



Fox News is not the only major news outlet using fear mongering to influence viewer engagement. However, their “reporting” on antifa has greatly influenced general opinions on the organization. In recent times, the term Antifa was ushered into the spot light of American News Outlets during the 2020 BLM protests. This event is not a fair representation of antifascist individuals but serves as a reference point for the perspective western society has on antifascist organizations and describes how the term antifascism became synonymous with violence.

2020 Capitol Hill Protests

Following the police murder of George Floyd, Seattle Washington became the epicenter of Antifa media coverage, after protesters transformed several blocks of the city center into the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, or “Chaz” (Sometimes referred to as “CHOP”). Hallie Golden reported this story for the Guardian, giving a general overview of the three-day self-governance. She reports protestors were able to fill the area, “after police abandoned their east precinct, following dangerous clashes between protestors and law enforcement” (Hallie Golden, 2020). Across individual interviews she was able to effectively capture the motivation for this act of protest. Dae Shik Kim Jr, 28, “I think what it’s doing is exposing the unnecessary need of an over-policed state” (Hallie Golden, 2020). Lisa McCallister, 30, “It’s the retaking of a space that was covered in violence for no reason” (Hallie Golden, 2020).

Shaun Scott, Seattle writer and activist, described Chaz as a kindred spirit to the Occupy Wallstreet movement, but stated “the movement for police abolition in Seattle right now has differentiated itself by presenting three very clear and actionable demands that the city can take action on in a pretty short period of time” (Hallie Golden, 2020).



Modern Major News Coverage of “Antifa”

Donald Trump tweeted “Domestic Terrorists have taken over Seattle, run by Radical Left Democrats, of course, LAW & ORDER!” The story told by Fox news about what took place on Capitol Hill on June 6th, 2020, portrays antifascist protesters in the same brutalist perspective. On June 11th, 2020, the Fox News homepage read the headline “Crazy Town – Seattle helpless as armed guards patrol anarchists’ ‘autonomous zone,’ shake down businesses: cops.” A focus is taken on describing the protestors as “violent.” Fox News tells the narrative that these protestors are violent for resisting the aggression faced by police. They post pictures of people with guns, crime, fire, terror, to terrorize their readers. To spread fear of these leftist groups, out of fear for their policies. Jim Brunner of the Seattle Times reported on June 12th, that the Fox news homepage article previously mentioned displayed “digitally altered and misleading photos” (Jim Brunner, 2020). The photos of fire, and guns, and fear, and hopelessness, were not real moments. Rather, the photos were a mashup of all the scary details from a huge variety of different photos take at different times. Fox News had swept the deepest corners of Seattle, collected every fragment of decay and edited them all together in a compilation series to sell their agenda of fear mongering to the public.

Other major news outlets made attempts to tell differing perspectives of the Capitol Hill Protest and sway the impact of Fox News’s false narrative. On June 15th, 2020, Dan Simon, et. al, published an article with CNN giving a look inside Capitol Hill’s “occupation,” a week into the protest. One protester spoke against violence directly stating “we’re just making sure that there’s no violence or, you know, anything against people of color. That’s why we’re here” (Dan Simon, 2020). Interview subjects continued to speak against violence. In a conversation with Raz Simone, an armed protester, who Donald Trump referred to as a “Domestic Terrorist” Raz said “this is not for...

Modern Major News Coverage of “Antifa”

...the police. I’m an American citizen, and my war is not with the police, it’s with the system and the accountability... But no, this is just for protection” (Dan Simon, 2020).



MSNBC spoke to the peaceful presence of protesters and tried to focus more on details of the “Black Lives Matter Mural,” on the street in Capitol Hill, in an attempt to calm the anxiety of their leftist audience. With little research it can be found that Fox News was telling direct lies about the events of the Capitol Hill Protest. However, within the echo chamber of misinformation, there is no awareness of facts.

The narrative painting Antifa as “violent terrorists” grew even stronger, as bullets began to fly. The first to die was a 27-year-old man, a demonstrator, a protester. The first to die was one of the people Fox News describes as violent. On June 7th, the Seattle Times reports the details of the incident, recounting from earlier that night that a car had intentionally driven into the crowd of demonstrators, likely inspired by the 2017 Charlottesville car attack, where another individual intentionally drove into peaceful BLM protesters, killing one person and injuring 35 (Seattle Times, 2020). Protesters attempted to slow down the car, when the driver pulled out a gun and killed the protester (Seattle Times, 2020).

Modern Major News Coverage of “Antifa”

Other antifa demonstrators attempted to revive the person, as the shooter gave himself in to police (Seattle Times, 2020). Antifa were the victims of violence. The driver and shooter was likely influenced by the Fox News media coverage of the capitol hill protests, characterizing protesters as violent terrorists. Who is really violent? Is it the protesters attempting to take back their streets? Or the police, killing George Floyd and institutionalizing violence as a right of governing rule? Or the press, telling a false narrative, and effectively killing a protester through their lies and divisive agenda?

Unfortunately for any reporter attempting to capture an alternative perspective of the Capitol Hill Protests, from this moment, the scene of the killing erupted into chaos. The Seattle times continued to report that tension rose throughout the night, and protestors began to creep beyond the barricades of their autonomous zone. “Around midnight, police used flash-bangs, pepper spray and tear gas against the remaining crowd, saying that some of the demonstrators were throwing bottles, rocks, fireworks, and other projectiles at police, as well as shining laser in officers’ eyes” (Seattle Times, 2020).

How do we define violence?

CHOP had truly devolved into chaos. The narrative had come true, but the story is responsible for its conclusion. The second shooting, the killing of a 19-year-old man, took place around 3 am the following Monday. Three years later, Mike Carter of the Seattle Times reported that someone had pleaded guilty to the murder. However little details are known about the killing, as Carter continues to report “the lawsuit alleged police were unable or unwilling to enter the CHOP zone to search for a suspect or conduct an investigation for hours after the shooting” (Mike Carter, 2023).

How do we define violence? Who has the authority of violence in this society?

Modern Major News Coverage of “Antifa”

By describing Antifacist protesters as “violent,” Fox News has shaped social perception of these individuals. Fox News does this, to sell their agenda of right-wing politics. They want to see their coverage of protests such as the 2020 translate into an increase in the militarization of the police, and Donald Trump’s led “Law and Order” polices. In the wake of George Floyd’s murder by police, the igniting moment for the capitol hill antifascist demonstration, it is obvious the people think differently than Fox News, and their divisive agenda.

Mainstream news media’s lying of the intentions and actions of antifascist protests makes it difficult to describe these characters. Participators of the Capitol Hill Protest, were confused, unorganized and idealist. Most people did not have intentions of violence or chaos. They were swept up in the moment and ran off with an idea before thinking through its execution.

Who is Antifa?

Antifa protestors at Capitol Hill serve as a reference point for western perspectives on Antifa, due to the mass coverage and significance of the events that took place in Seattle that June. However, this event, these individuals, and especially this news coverage, is an inaccurate representation of antifascist political parties. The purpose of sharing this collection of observations from Marat, and other antifascist organizations in Munich, is to describe the character of these individuals through facts. With so much misrepresentation and ulterior motives in the mainstream media’s coverage of antifascist organizations, it is important to understand who these people are and what they stand for. Who are these violent terrorist extremists? Who is antifa?

**Anarchist and
Communist
Introductions**

Anarchist Introduction - Saul and Kahla

Among the violence of a mosh pit at Marat, two buzzed heads, cut, and dyed a light piss colored blond, swept bodies to the floor. They held hands, spinning and swirling, stirring the pot of the crowded dance floor. They were maybe in their late teenage years, a couple too I assumed, their presentation expressed maliciousness; dark goth clothing, combat boots, thick eyeliner; however, their youthfulness and cute attitude invited friendliness. A couple of wide-eyed lovers estranged in the danger of clashing metal, secured by their closeness and clone-ness of each other, fighting against the storm of modern society.

In between bands I approached them. Introduced myself. They both spoke English. Lit a cigarette. Saul and Kahla. A couple indeed. Ages twenty and nineteen. Members of Anarchisteishce Gruppe (AG).

Saul spoke to me about the connection between punk and politics. Really, he hates the word punk. He views punks as people who consume alternative culture, just to seem cool, and do not fulfill their responsibility of political action. Through meaningful measures, whether protest or education, he feels a responsibility to create the society he envisions. He views himself as a rebel. Declaring to me that Marat served as a political headquarters of sorts for various antifascist and left-wing local organizations. I introduced myself as a journalist, and asked if I could record the conversation, they agreed, but Kahla began the interview with inquisition of my position “are you an anarchist or a communist?”

At this point in time, “antifascism” was something I heard of in memories of distant dreams. Something interesting, existing under the surface of my current understanding. Politically, I align with left wing politics, and I would definitely consider myself to be “against fascism.” However, without any knowledge on antifa as an

organization at the time, I could not speak to whether or not I align myself with their ideas. Especially considering the media portrayal of these groups in western society, as at the time I was inclined to think antifa was violent and extreme. I for sure could not answer whether I am an anarchist or communist.

“Um usually like I think I align myself more with anarchist ideas.” I responded to Kahla.

Both Saul and Kahla nodded in synch, as if I had answered correctly. Deepening my curiosity. I asked if they were part of an organization of sorts.

“I-we go to the meetings here, the anarchist chapter ones.” - Saul.

Kahla began prodding and prying at me a bit more, maybe suspicious of my answer, but likely it was more from her rowdy personality.

“Like how did you even find this place?”

I stuttered trying to explain that I was Canadian, on exchange at LMU in Munich, also that I write for Disorder Magazine in Vancouver Canada and that I really like rock music and it is hard to find in Munich, so I ended up here. Deep exhale.

“Canada is cool, at least you’re not American, fucking fascist state.” -Saul

Thinking to myself about how I totally am American and didn’t move to Canada until I was nineteen. I am twenty-one now.

“Germany is the same... though like it’s all the same.” – Kahla

“So do you think...” -Saul

“What makes you an anarchist?” -Kahla

Again, I got myself stuck in a stutter. Unsure of whether or not I was even interviewing Kahla and Saul, or if they were interviewing me.

“Freedom of the individual, fuck colonial capitalism, fuck the police.” I cringe at my words listening to the transcript retrospectively.

Anarchist and Communist Introductions

We had a short conversation about, capitalism, community policing, and the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, where we all found common agreement, however the conversation settled when Saul found disagreement with my “freedom of the individual phrasing.”

“That’s the problem with the United States, they are obsessed with the individual....You can see it in celebrities, and Hollywood and everything. The common good...” -Saul

“We all suffer for the individual. People get so rich...” -Kahla

“And nothing good comes from it... Its backwards.” – Saul

I attempted to turn the question back towards my anarchist introducers.

“What does anarchy mean to you?”

Kahla answered the question in relation to communists, which would only be educational if I had knowledge on communist groups. However, I did not, and was only left with further intrigue.

“For sure not communist. They want to just change the German government... We are against all nations.

“Ya free all borders, like we wouldn’t have any immigrants or refugees, people can live in peace.” - Saul

“Communism is just another political party, dividing people.” - Kahla

“We are really against fascism like everybody is from Earth you know.” - Kahla

Kahla and Saul first suggested a divide between Anarchists and Communists, but this difference appears to be a greater canyon than previously imagined. Kahla spoke as if she thought Communists were not really antifascist, therefore being fascist themselves.

Among the people around me. Laughing together, drinking beers and dancing to music, there was a line in the sand between Communists and Anarchists. I was further curious on the divisive characteristics of these organizations, all underneath the umbrella of Antifa.

“Antifa” was then introduced to me as a labeling term, defining a complex network of differing political ideas, loosely under the categories of anarchy and communism.

Additionally, I was curious of the realities of Saul and Kahla’s proposed open all borders, no nations scenario, and if this idea was shared among other anarchists.

“How would that work if there were no nations, like would there be no government?”

“No national governments. Really, we are globalists.... We believe people all can coexist in peace.” -Kahla

At this point in the conversation, some of Kahla and Saul’s friends had come over to join us, and someone else chimed in.

“Countries start wars people don’t.”

Saul then said something which stayed with me the rest of the night.

“But like we would need some global government or something, but no capitalism, a complete trade economy.”

The conversation fell apart as Saul and Kahla’s friends irrupted into chatter about what roles they would play in this dream society. I had more questions to ask, more answers to seek, but I felt I had overstayed my presence, and I drifted away to smoke another cigarette on my lonesome away from the crowd.

What did Saul mean by a global government? I was reminded about what they said earlier about focusing on the common good, rather than the individual. The foundation of Germany and the United States, among many other democracies, are focused on protecting individual freedoms. However, suggesting a world government possess so many questions about the power of those truly in charge and the risk of all of Earth living under a dictator. Who would elect these peoples? Who decides who is in power? How can a world government operate while illuding corruption? What checks and balance would need to be in place to secure the freedoms of society? And what individual liberties would we be required to

sacrifice? Anarchy had gone full circle back to fascism.

Authoritarian control, with power of that degree would sustain the cultural identity of whomever is the supreme power, therefore exterminating any diversity of society and culture. However, I was unsure if their ideas were representative of the Munich anarchist chapter, being they were the first anarchists I have encountered.

Saul and Kahla introduced me to the complex division between communist and anarchist groups within the antifa umbrella. Although, I still struggled to grasp the ideologies of these organizations. The following Wednesday, the Munich anarchist chapter was holding a meeting at Marat, an educational seminar about the current refuge crisis in Greece. The topic seemed niche, however I hoped it would give a me a chance to learn more about the operations and ideas of anarchists and further antifascists.

But my night was not over, and I sought a perspective from the other side of the antifa coin. I wanted to talk to a communist.

Communist Introduction - Evi and Nora

After enjoying another set of rough rock music, I searched for my communist connection. With agape curiosity, I attempted to initiate conversations with a handful of the goers. All the “interviews” failed to dig into the topic of communism, as when I began nipping at their heels, asking questions such as “are you involved in any political organizations here at Marat?” or “how do you feel about the communist groups here?” these individuals failed to give insightful answers or changed the topic completely. Unsure of whether or not these people either were even involved politically, or simply did not have to want to have the conversation, I felt a bit disappointed. Still, I enjoyed the final band returned outside to enjoy a final smoke before leaving for the night, ready to search further into this story on another day.

Sitting in the same place as earlier, underneath the Calvin and Hobbes mural, cast by a dim light, staining the greasy evening in a grimy hollow yellow, Saul and Kahla were chatting and laughing with two other young people. One a bit older, long dark hair and plain clothes, the other similar in age to Saul and Kahla, matching in shaved head but spotted with leopard print, dressed in flowery flowy clothes and furs like a Russian grandma. I wandered over smiling, and Saul and Kahla introduced me to their friends Evi and Nora.

To my surprise, Kahla mentioned they were communists, and recommended I interview them, to keep the story balanced.

I was surprised because Kahla had spoken quite harshly about communists earlier that evening, but felt a greater feeling of gratitude for the introduction, as this seemed to be just the people I was searching for. I started recording on my phone.

Saul and Kahla said their goodbyes and goodnights, leaving me alone with the pressure of executing an insightful interview with these strangers. Evi broke the tension by telling me their ideas without being asked, like Kahla, by describing communism through comparison to anarchy.

“We are all friends from school and Saul showed me this place, but they are not as active politically... It’s just anarchists really.” - Nora

They don’t do anything; they just talk about things, and they are waiting around for the world to fall apart.” -Evi

“Like doing interviews, are you active... what makes you an anarchist?” -Nora

Again, my fake ties to anarchy were being questioned. I defensively tried to steer the conversation away from this by instead talking about political action I have been involved in in Vancouver, before finally asking “So you think Communism can work here in Germany?”

“Well, it works for us.” -Evi

“What do you mean?”

“Well, we both live just south of Munich, on this stretch of farmland with a bunch of friends. We have a garden, and everyone has different chores to keep the place going. For the most part we completely take care of ourselves.” -Evi

It intrigued me to find they lived within a form of commune. It reminded me of how Kahla and Saul talked about how they would all have defined roles in their dream society. What was different about these two ideas of living?

“How is this different from what Kahla and Saul think. Don’t they want a trade-based economy as well?” I put some additional pressure on this question by adding on “I don’t understand how we are all so divided, shouldn’t we be working together when we are all here at the same place?”

It felt as if this winter night in Munich got a bit warmer.

“It’s important because we want very different things in the long run. They want complete chaos and freedom, which isn’t fair.” -Nora

“Scheiße wäre verrückt (shit would be crazy)” – Evi

“We believe society can be equal if we have equal wages and fund things to help people. The problem is capitalism.” -Nora

“We have to look at things like we are all living on a ship trying to keep it afloat.... We can’t be running around... doing whatever we want, and we can’t just wait around for the ship to sink. There are roles to play, but it can be with everyone equal” -Evi

“You need to know what side you are on because things are going to move very quickly.” -Nora

I tried not to let Nora’s potential threats distract me from the insight they were sharing. Nora was confident that change was coming. They viewed anarchists as headless chickens, self-proclaiming radicals, without a real agenda or cause. They viewed themselves as scholars and academics, morally superior to

anarchists, and the true “antifa.” Around this moment Evi left to go home, we said our goobyes, but I was settled for a bit longer with Nora as they finished their beer.

“What do you think is keeping Germany from being a Communist state?”

“Just its reputation. With all the violence surrounding the history of the Soviets, people here, especially in filthy rich fuckin um Munich, just don’t understand communism.”

“What kind of action do you take to fight for a Communist agenda? Is there a Communist party?”

“The Communist Party is really small right now... Munich just keeps getting crazier. The AFD party is pretty strong here.... We have a Communist Headquarters where we hold seminars and stuff if you’re ever interested.”

My conversation with Nora became scattered after this comment, and soon we both said our goodbyes and disappeared for the night. However, this was only the beginning. Nora eventually became a good friend of mine, as I began attending both Communist and Anarchist meetings, learning their ideas and meeting their people... Although, before going deeper into the antifascist wormhole, I spent the next few nights staying up researching the history of anarchy and communism in Germany, to help me better function future interviews and fulfill a greater perspective on these individuals. From my conversation with Nora, I found how little I knew about German politics, given that I did not what they were talking about when mentioning the “AFD party.”

German Antifa Youth

What I learned though my introductory conversations with Saul, Kahla, Evi and Nora, was that there was story to be found in the complexity of antifa. I was surprised to find how antifa was divided into the categories of anarchy and communism, although

Anarchist and Communist Introductions

this divide was still unclear. All of these people seemed to be friends, and united in a common goal of being against fascism. Their divisiveness seemed to be a flat tire in their efforts, as Nora specifically mentioned that the right-wing party was gaining power in Munich.

These teenagers I talked to, although fitting all the labels of antifa, did not seem to be the violent extremists terrorizing the screens of Fox News. Rather they were emotional and naive idealists. These emotions can be translated to the antifascists of Seattle's 2020 Capitol Hill protest. Disorganized, divided and ignorant of the realities of their sociological proposals, but far from evil and malicious terrorists. Within the words of Saul, Kahla, Evi and Nora, I felt a sense of righteousness. They all felt that they were standing for what was best for society, and I was inspired they fought for what they believe, even if I do not completely agree with their politics. They are right that the way of currently running is the world, is not working. There was much to learn about anarchy and communism in Germany to fully understand these antifascist characters.



History of Antifa in Germany

Fascism?

Germany has an obvious contextual relevance to the topic of anti-fascism, given the fame of the Nazi Party. The history of strife between fascist and antifascist governments in Germany, make it a reliable representation of genuine antifascist ideologies and organizations. With such an atrocious fascist backstory, and the monumental guilt of modern Germany, antifascism is much less stigmatized than it is in the United States.

The word “fascism” is of Italian heritage, long being associated with the “Fascisti of Benito Mussolini and the fasces” (Merriam-Webster). “Fascism” as it is in English, is the descendent of the Italian word “fascio,” literally meaning “bundle,” and figuratively “group” (Merriam-Webster). This speaks to the conceptual foundation of the modern definition of fascism; “a political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition” (Merroam-Webster).

The actions of the National Socialist German Workers Party, perfectly fulfils this definition. Nazis were following a philosophy, a movement, and eventually a regime, exalting the German nation and their faulty understanding of the Arian race, above the rights of any individual. Nazi Germany was an autocratic government, with Hitler as their dictator. They forced their fascist values through diabolical extermination of other races and peoples. The concept of “traditional racial and national purity” in the heart of fascism, is alive and well today. Although not usually described as fascist, slogans such as “Make America Great Again,” signal fascist and therefor Nazi ideologies by a prioritizing national and racial identity rather than the freedoms of individuals and diversity of society.

Saul’s anarchist ideas reference ideas of fascism, as he spoke about prioritizing the nation or race of the entire world, over the

individual. However, this differs from fascism because he is supportive of diversity and is not prioritizing one group of people over another. However however, it is unclear how a world government would rule, and it is possible that fascism could prevail in this scenario if a potential dictator advances economic and social regimentation and oppression of populations of people.

Anti-Fascist Handbook

In 2017, Mark Bray published a book called *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*, which due to its timely significance in relation to the election of Donald Trump and its introspective uncovering of historical growth of the antifa movement, has become foundational in antifascist literature. Bray has been cited as a controversial figure in the past, as Derek Hawkins writes for the *Washington Post*, that Dartmouth repudiated Bray for statements he made about violent protest in 2017, while he was a lecture at the University (Derek Hawkins, 2017). The statement made by Bray was on “Meet the Press” where he said, “when pushed, self-defense is a legitimate response to white supremacies and neo-Nazi violence” (Derek Hawkins, 2017). Following this comment, the conservative site *Campus Reform*, created an imaginary interpretation of his comments saying Bray had “endorsed antifa’s violent protest tactics,” thus promoting public outrage towards Mark Bray, and prompting Dartmouth to distance themselves from the professor.

The twisting of Mark Bray’s words falls into the agenda of right-wing media to characterize antifa as violent and extreme. Despite his controversy at Dartmouth University, Mark Bray’s book *Antifa: The Antifascist Handbook* is credible in its knowledge of the antifascist history. Mark Bray’s framework in defining “antifa” will be used to describe the history of “antifa” movement in Germany.

Defining “antifa”

Mark describes antifa as a complex term, varying in definition depending on the historical context. Generally, the term is ascribed to individuals and political/social groups oppose of the ideas of fascism (Mark Bray, 2017, X). Throughout history, different political groups have found themselves in the anti-fascist role, with greatly different world views and political agendas depending on their time and place in history. Mark Bray argues that although antifascism varies through generations, the argument against fascism continues through history. “Anti-fascism is many things, but perhaps most fundamentally, it is an argument about the historical continuity between different eras of far-right violence and the many forms of collective self-defense that it has necessitated across the globe over the past century” (Mark Bray, 2017, XIX).

German Antifa before WWII

Before the rise of Nazism, Antifascist parties existed in Germany, and Mark Bray thoroughly describes these antifascists to be the Communists (KPD) and Social Democrats (SPD), because of their fundamental values of being against far-right violence and against the favoritism of traditional culture and nationality (Mark Bray, 2017, XX). However, the term antifa was not part of the German vocabulary, until these anti-fascist groups began to organize collectively against the rise of the Nazi party (Loren Balhorn, 2017).

The rise of Nazi ideology swept over Germany in the early 1930s. Communist and Social Democrat powers were distracted, focused on their own agenda.

Antifa was formed in a desperate attempt in stopping Hitler’s rise to power. These groups were called “Antifaschistische Ausschüsse,” “Antifaschistische Komitees,” or the now famous “Antifaschistische Aktion” – “Antifa” for short (Loren Balhorn, 2017). The adoption of the word antifa, was the result of a hail marry attempt in creating an alliance between Communist and Social

Democratic workers in 1932 (Loren Balhorn, 2017). The term antifa is vague and difficult to define because it was constructed to find common agreement between Communists and Democrats. When on the brink of extinction, these parties needed to work together. What they shared, and what became the foundation of their organization, was their enemy, fascism.

This initial forming of German Antifa is also responsible for the iconic double flag logo, which “has since become one of the Left’s most well-known symbols” (Loren Balhorn, 2017). Modern antifa has great respect and understanding of the birth of their collective identity. Bray writes that “over the past decades, antifa have self-consciously adopted interwar anti-fascist symbols like the two flags of the Anti-faschistische Aktion, the three arrows of the Iron Front, and the raised-fist salute” (Mark Bray, 2017, XX). During my time in Munich, I found the two flags symbol to be common amongst all Antifa organizations, as a symbol and reminder that we are all on the same side. Modern antifa members collectively respect and uphold the symbols and history of antifascism which initially brought together Communist and Democratic parties.



In 1933, only a year after initial Antifa organization, President of Germany Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler to the position of Chancellor of the Reich (Florian Wilde, 2013). The KPD and SPD were victims to the Nazi's new power. February 23rd, 1933, Nazi thugs stormed KPD headquarters (Florian Wilde, 2013). February 27th, 1933, Nazi's burned down the German parliament, signaling their growing presence to the SPD's majority power (Florian Wilde, 2013). Antifa was destroyed as the separate groups became obsolete to the rising Nazi force.

Antifa was too slow to organize. Social Democrats and Communists too divided to work together to fight fascism. Fascism won, but the idea of Antifa as an organization had been built for future generations.

German antifa after WWII

After WWII most of the Germans making up the Communist and Social Democrat parties were dead, they had been murdered by the Nazis, or died at war (Loren Balhron, 2017).

Germany in 1945 was in a dire situation, becoming the staging ground for the longest geopolitical confrontation in modern history (Loren Balhorn, 2017). The Cold War was coming. The divide of Germany was the divide of antifa. Despite having numbers ranging from the hundreds to thousands across major German cities, the antifa party lacked the influence to point Germany in a sovereign direction, against American and Soviet powers (Loren Balhorn, 2017). Instead of envisioning a new future for Germany, antifa became obsessed with pursuing former Nazi collaborates, while the United States and the Soviet Union began planting the seeds for their elaborate war of puppets (Loren Balhorn, 2017).

American and Soviet influences tore at the edges of antifa. The Social Democratic leadership under Kurt Schumacher sided with Wester Occupiers, while the former Communist party was

forced to form the KPD with Soviet powers (Loren Balhorn, 2017).

The contrasting relationships between America–Social Democrats, and Soviets-German Communists, further diluted the overarching antifa agenda, and wrote the history of the current state of these political parties. The American's attempted to balance and bring together the Social Democrat and Formal Nazi Hierarchy on the promise of a coming Democracy (Loren Balhorn, 2017). The Social Democratic party has sense rejected its far-left history, and become a modern-moderate party, like the Democratic Party in the United States. This has allowed for the Social Democrats to maintain power in German elections in recent times. Today, Social Democrats tie themselves to ideas of capitalist reform and look down at antifa, as extreme leftists.

The Soviets however, absolutely rejected any presence of former Nazi hierarchy, and were hardly interested in ideas of Democracy (Loren Balhorn, 2017). For some time, the Communist Party was able to self-organize through union elections (Loren Balhorn, 2017). However, in 1948, the public split between the Soviet Union and Tito's Yugoslavians, motivated the Soviets to further their influence in Germany (Loren Balhorn, 2017). The Stalinization of the Soviet occupied zone accelerated, limiting German Communist spaces and shutting down self-organization (Loren Balhorn, 2017). In the following years the Soviet occupied zone in Germany became a place of authoritarian control. Fascism had risen in new form. The Former German Communist party became a glimmer of a myth for thirty years, until a new generation of antifa followed their history to reunify the antifa party.

Post-Cold War Rebirth of German Antifa

1968. A sparkle of antifascism glimmers. An entirely new generation of communists emerge through the unification of industrial workers (Loren Balhorn, 2017).

1972. Anarchy is reborn in Germany. Taking a new place in antifa culture. Published by the Swiss journal *Anarchisme et Nonviolence*, the first issue of *Grasswurzelrevolution* (Grassroots Revolution) became available in Augsburg. (Jesse Cohn, 2009). This piece of literature gave new perspective to leftist politics, sense becoming the anarchist journal with the highest circulation in German speaking countries and initiating the education of new anarchist class of antifa (Jesse Cohn, 2009).

1980. Anarchists become increasingly politically active in Germany. Horst Stowasser published *Project A*, an in-depth description/manifesto of the history, goals, and actions of anarchy. In this paper, ideas of economic balance, community of living, diversity, democracy, and council, are organized in a dogma like format (Horst Stowasser, 1986). In discussion with Saul, Kahla and anarchists yet to be referenced, these ideas are relevant in the modern era. "The mid 1980's also saw the emergence of the Automen, a political subculture strongly revolved around the defense of squatted houses and youth centers" (Jesse Cohn, 2009). Autonomous areas have since become central to antifa ideology, with CHOP being a spectacle of an example of these ideas resurging today.

1990. Fascism is again a threat. Far right groups, citing Nazi ideologies, perform, mob attacks against asylum-seekers in several eastern provinces (Loren Balhorn, 2017). Communists and anarchists are forced to organize antifa in new form. This generation of antifa was called "Antifaschistische Aktion/Bundesweite Organisation or AA/BO (Loren Balhorn, 2017). Although these groups were similar in ideology, the focus and actions of individual AA/BO chapters ranged greatly. "Some antifa focus on destroying

fascist organizing, others focus on building popular community power and inoculating society to fascism through promoting their leftist political vision” (Mark Bray, 2017, XVI). Many of the individual chapters would focus on specific-single issues, which I later discover is maintained in the Communist chapters. However, antifa as a whole is not a single-issue movement (Mark Bray, 2017, XVII). The collective identity of AA/BO groups were “radical but vague and deeply heterogenous in their specifics” direct influences of the political climate of Antifa literature and understanding today (Loren Balhorn, 2017).

2001. Germany followed moderate-progressive policy change, and fear of fascism dwindled. The AA/BO split up citing fascism as less of a threat (Loren Balhorn, 2017). What remains of the squatting infrastructure from previous antifa generations continues to serve as political headquarters and meeting spaces for antifa members as “autonomous zones” (Loren Balhorn, 2017). Marat is one of those places. Collecting fragments of antifa culture under the same roofs as their ancestors.

2017. For the first time in nearly 70 years, a far-right party gets elected to the German parliament (Samuel Huneke, 2024). The AfD. The party’s platform of anti-immigration, anti-euro, stance, was at first viewed as an extreme, but not threatening, nationalist party (Holly Ellyatt, 2017). However, as the party grew, collecting individuals reminiscent of a German identity, and fascist polices prioritizing nation over individual, their impact on parliament became inevitable. In their 2017 parliamentary debut the AfD made up around 10% of the electorate (Samuel Huneke, 2024). Around the same time the AfD was stewing its run at Democracy, Donald Trump was spouting a similar platform in the United States. A perfect model for the narcissistic dictator needed to revitalize a fascist state in the modern era. Germany is not alone in being victim to

the rise of a fascism party influenced by the United States' MAGA Party. However, the dramatic history of fascism in Germany makes it especially significant to see its abundant return.

Today the AfD sits around 22%. In an area like conservative Bavaria, this statistic is much higher (Samuel Huneke, 2024). Against a divided left, the AfD is able to make considerable policy change without being confronted. The resurgence of fascism worldwide corresponds with the rise of antifa. The capitol hill protests were a direct response to not only the murder of George Floyd, but also to a frustration with the direction of the United States. The young people I talk to in Germany, are also motivated by frustration. Fed up with the rising power of fascism. Inspired by the history of communist, social democrat and anarchist communities in their home cities.



**Munich Anarchist
Chapter**

AG Educational Seminars

First Anarchist Meeting. What the fuck do I wear?

The following Wednesday after my introductory interview with Saul and Kahla, I returned to Marat for an educational seminar on the topic of abuse towards asylum seekers by the New Democracy Party in Greece. Hosted by AG, an Anarchist organization based in Munich, at Marat.

In the space usually filled with dancing, drinking, and an occasional fist fight, chairs sat in perfect little rows facing the stage. I sat with Saul and Kahla among the audience, uniform in dark clad clothing, shaved or died hair and piercings in wherever can be pierced. In formal button shirts and dressy jeans, the presenters began their slide show about the current state of the humanitarian crisis in Greece. Both presenters were from Greece, however I unfortunately did not record their names.

My American ears were grateful they spoke in English. From what I gathered from my notes of the meeting. Turkish migrants, many of which being Kurds fleeing persecution, or others fleeing increasingly authorization politics and rising inflation, have been arriving at Greek islands sense the early 2010s. The New Democracy party in Greece has breaking international law by turning away migrants and keeping many in detention centers estranged from family members. The presenters shared heartbreaking stories of families drowning after being turned away by German police. Stories of racist violence towards migrants. Stories of starvation, abuse, sexism, and every possible humanitarian extreme. It became obvious the New Democracy party was of fascist intent. Anti-immigration policies, anti-immigration violence, to maintain a traditional Greek culture. Nation over individual. After an hour or so, the presentation finished to open for questions about the humanitarian crisis.

Most questions were about specifics of the crisis, or the political landscape of Greece. One question stood out to me in particular.

A voice from the front row spoke up. "What can we do about this?"

The presenter sighed in a moment of reluctant defeat. Disappointment. Frustration.

"Well, there is not much you can do here, being German. You can support the left party in Greece, you can donate money, so we can get the New Democrats out of office, if you have the funds you can donate to the humanitarian aid projects, we have them listed."

The other lady brought up the list of humanitarian projects requesting aid to support refugees before chiming in "also you know, we need to look for the same things in Germany."

Me, myself. I do not have extra money to give. I cannot vote in Greek elections; I can't even vote here in Germany. What action is possible? I left my first Anarchist meeting feeling heartbroken by the tragedies of this world. The rise of fascism is a curse in all places. Action felt impossible.

The next couple meetings I attended; rather educational seminars, followed this same script of presenting the audience with a topic of tragedy but failed to follow up with steps of action. The waterfall of decay and dystopia from across the world, was difficult to grasp from a basement in Munich. The stories blurred together, in a swirl of tragedy and depression. Trauma porn. Fixation on all that's wrong in the world, to the extent that you feel hopeless in this life, and hopeless for the future of society. Waiting for everything to fall apart.

My interviews grew more confrontational the more of these anarchist seminars I attended. I asked fellow attendees of the meetings and presumed anarchists, what their goals were, why they attended these meetings, and what action can be taken. Some notable answers were.

"Well capitalism is no longer working; we are at a breaking point. Like all the banks are going to collapse everything." - Spikyblondehairlate30s

“A lot to learn you know, we need to be educated on these things and this is the most reliable source.... Ya I like it here.” - Mowhawkstonerkid

“Be educated. Learn about fascism so you can recognize when its coming... the most important. But that’s never enough, be active in protesting fascism, know your local politics, be active.” -Jacob

Members of the Munich AG expressed to be they were waiting for capitalism to collapse, to then create a better society. They felt that we were on the final breaking point before capitalism falls apart, and modern democracies will be left vulnerable to the actions of radical political rapture. Just as Christians wait for the second coming of Christ, anarchists wait for capitalism to collapse.

However, if the collapse of capitalism is immediate and expected. What is the purpose of these educational seminars? I still lacked any realistic ideas of action, pre or post capitalist collapse.

Complexity of AG - Jacob Interview

Jacob was the bartender at Marat. Upon my frequenting of the AG meetings, as well as the weekend shows, he became a familiar character. Upon a conversation following one meeting, I discovered he also studies Sociology at LMU. Over this shared characteristic, I was able to introduce to him the project I was working on and convince him to participate in a formal interview at the LMU Sociology building.

Wide framed glasses, long sleeked blonde hair, little pins on his leather jacket showcasing his political beliefs everywhere he went. Jacob spoke little, but in a way that it was obvious he was thinking lots. He was shy, but seemingly judgmental. Young, yet intellectual. Although he was an anarchist just as Saul and Kahla are, he was more thoughtful and realistic than the younger anarchist members.

Our conversation began casually, I asked if I could record a transcript of our conversation and he responded, "let's just chat." I took notes to the best of my ability.

We began talking about how he got involved at Marat. He told me that he grew up in Munich and started working there while in secondary school, after becoming a constant presence at the venue. Most of his friends and family align themselves with the punk aesthetic of left-wing politics. After working the bar, and experiencing meetings of both Anarchists and Communists, he was drawn further to the anarchist side of antifa.

I asked more specific questions about how Marat functions as a political headquarters. He gave insight about how the space has been retained by squatters since the 1980s, and now operates as a community arts program, allowing it to qualify for government funding. I found it ironic to hear that a space where individuals are actively plotting against the state of the German government is supported by tax dollars.

Jacob continued to tell me that the Anarchist Collective; AG, throws most of the shows at Marat, most of the political meetings are through AG as well, although the Communist Party and other groups also occasionally use the space to organize. Marat was directly without any political identity, now operating under the identity of a "community arts program" but was mostly a home to Anarchist groups.

I say "groups" because AG is far from a unanimous political party. Many of the members greatly disagree on their politics. The seminars are organized in an educational matter to bring together differing opinions towards the greater goal of fighting fascism.

As Jacob made clear to me, AG, Munich Anarchists; are antifascist in the very literal sense. Their identity is being against fascism in every form.

However, AG was stern in not being alienated with Communism. When asking how anarchists and communists differ when fighting against fascism, Jacob argued that the lack of

democracy in communist proposals creates a risk for fascist influence. He is critical of the Communists proposed rise to power, believing it is naive of them to think they can stage a political revolution with such a small population. Further criticizing the Communist “council state,” arguing this form of hierarchy, where each level elects the next higher level, will dilute democracy and create a dictatorship, when the top level of councils will have no one to report to. Likewise, he is also suspicious of anarchists following Horst Stowasser’s Project A, as he views the proposed ideas of council governing lend themselves to the same risks as communist reform.

The divorce of Communists and AG was a recent event. Jacob spoke of AG’s ancestor, AG/R; a cohesive antifascist organization made of anarchists and Trotsky following Communists. The groups split in the early 2010s, as Jacob claimed the Communist Party felt a resurgence in support due to increasingly progressive policy change around the time, and broke off to build their own space, and pursue more than just an antifascist agenda. What I can infer is that AG/R was formed in the early 1990s, in relation to the formation of AA/BO, an organization which was created to unify diverse anti-fascist perspectives in response to Nazi attacks on asylum seekers. The diversity of political beliefs present at AG today, is representative of AA/BO’s original collective and non-specific identify.



-Flag of the Former AG/R

Information about AG/R was incredibly difficult to find online. In my stumbling on the internet, I came across a blog post on crwflags about a sighting of the black over red “per bend sinister flag” at a May 2002 Munich demonstration. A commentor correctly referenced the flag to be of AG/R, but also left a link leading to a webpage preserving texts from the former AG/R. I have no idea who made this, but it is the only information I can find on AG/R, outside of my conversations with AG and Communist members.

Articles such as, “No Revolution without emancipation” and “Get back on the offensive” argue ideas in line with Jacob’s pursuit of an antifascist agenda. The group was based in Hamburg, with the above flag belonging to the Munich Chapter of AG/R.

Anarchistische Gruppe / Rätekommunisten



Diese Seite stellt Texte der ehemaligen AG/R zur Verfügung.

Keine Revolution ohne Emancipation
Palomik gegen die Generallinie der Sozialistischen Linken (SoL)

Keine Macht für niemand!
Eine anarchistisch-rätekommunistische Erklärung

“Galileo” Nr.8, Zeitsung der anarchistischen Föderation OMA-IFA
mit einer Selbstdarstellung von uns

Europäischer Aktionstag gegen den Kapitalismus 31. März 2012
Bericht von uns
Unser Aufruf

Wie der “Sozialismus” zur NSDAP kam

Wer die Lebensbedingungen von Millionen Menschen ständig verschlechtert, braucht Überwachungsorgane und Unterdrückungsapparate

Szenepolitik: Gegen linken Konservatismus
Zum schändlichen Gezeck zwischen Antideutschen und Antifas

At this point in the conversation, I had learned of the identity of AG to be an attempt at continuing the culture of fighting fascism in all forms. However, the group seemed to struggle organizing due to their dwindling numbers, and little political power. The divorce from Communism had hurt the organization and limited the strength of their action.

When asking Jacob about what types of action the groups take outside of the seminars, he invited me to another meeting, this one an organizational meeting for a protest the following weekend. AG were planning to protest a group of Neo Nazi's holding a memorial upon the graves of Nazi soldiers.

AG Counter Protest

November 15th, 2023. I returned to Marat for an AG meeting, rejuvenated by the opportunity of participating in genuine action. Among my new anarchist friends, we sat in the rows of metal chairs, ready for the presenters to feed us with their plans of protest.

The meeting began by explaining what the protest was all about. In the East of Munich, there is a famous cemetery called the Ostfriedhof. Many notable historical figures were buried here, including leftist leaders such as Rudolf Christopher Freiherr von Gersdorf, who was involved in plotting an assassination attempt of Hitler. However, every year in November, Neo Nazis climb out of their hiding places to organize at Ostfriedhof. Anton Dunckern; a former SS general and Johan Rattenhuber; Hitler's chief bodyguard were buried here. They were not particularly important figures in the Nazi regime; however, most high-ranking Nazi's had been cremated, an effort to limit future Nazi demonstrations.

Neo-Nazi groups use this event as an opportunity to display their combined numbers and strength, as well as to connect with other Neo-Nazis for future organizational efforts. Their most important goal was to sway other people deterring on the edge of Nazism to join their efforts, by gaining attention in the news media.

The presenters explained that such an obvious display of fascism cannot be ignored. As Jacob previously mentioned, AG's focus was to fight fascism. An organization of Nazi wannabes were AG's perfect target for a counter protest.

The second half of this meeting was filled with discussion about the tactical specifics of the counter protest operation. Presenters displayed maps of the cemetery, with red markings for where they expected the Nazi's to organize, blue where the police will be located, and black labeling the AG route of protest. They planned to try and fill the streets surrounding the cemetery, but to always stay a block away to avoid confrontation. If they could be louder than the Nazi's, they could deter attention from their memorial, limiting the impact of their display of fascist ideologies. AG's goal was to soak up all attention from the press, eradicating the advertisement methods of Neo-Nazis.

Jokingly, one of the presenters mentioned to simply avoid the Communist Party if we run into them, because "we have no idea what they are planning." The crowd laughed, with someone chiming in "they have been plotting for months," and someone else "they are doing the same thing."

I became aware that the counter protest operation was taking place the following Saturday, with this being the first AG meeting about the events taking place. Apparently, the Communists have been organizing for some time, while this is the first open discussion Anarchists were having on the event. This characterization of the spontaneity of AG compared to the thoroughness of the Communist Party proved to be relevant to both the nature of the organizations and the personalities of the individuals themselves. Perhaps differing personalities are driven to the contrasting organizations, based on the temperance of their political beliefs.

In this situation, the spontaneity of AG's organization harmed the ability of members to participate in the counter protest, including myself. Although this opportunity of actual protest felt critical in the story of AG, I had already bought train tickets to Berlin, a trip

planned for weeks with friends. Before leaving Marat for the night, I asked among my friends at the meeting, if anyone could report back to me on the events. Saul, Kahla, Jacob, and none of their fellow acquaintances would be attending. Desperately fearing I would miss this part of the story, I asked among strangers who would be attending the protest. Most said they would not be. They had to jobs to work, responsibilities to fulfill, the protest was simply too soon. The disorganization of the counter protest prevented people from taking action.

Gratefully, an art student at the Munich academy, black eyes matching black hair, matching black clothing, matching pale skin, was interested in my project, and agreed to give me a report when I returned. Xandra. This introduction further deepened my knowledge of other anarchist groups in Munich and opened the doors beyond Marat into the Black Rat Collective.

Following my adventure to Berlin, I met with Xandra at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts to hear the events of the counter protest. Giddy for this piece of the story. Hoping for an absolute thrill. Action. Drama. Nazis. AG members had talked a lot of talk, and I was looking forward to learning how they execute their ideas.

We began by getting to know each other more. Xandra is a talented performance artist at the Arts Academy, and we grew closer over time, as I would often visit the academy after class. When we began the recording, she spoke spookily in a crispy crackly Bavarian accent...

“Oh my god, ok counter protest, nobody was there.”

Unsurprising, only a small percentage of AG members arrived at counter protest. Likely due to the eleventh-hour timing of the counter protest organizing. Xandra continued to explain they did not have nearly enough people to surround the Neo-Nazis.

The group of twenty AG members there stood with signs, chanting about a block away from where the 50+ crowd of Neo-Nazis were demonstrating.

“Then they left, I guess, and marched around the cemetery” -
Xandra (laughing)

“But you didn’t know?” –(also laughing)

“No, they left the graves and ran into the Communists who were parading around.”

Supposedly, the Neo-Nazis had gotten into a bit of a screaming match with the protesting Communist party, but with the presence of the police, the demonstration was swiftly shut down. Without knowing what had taken place, the group of AG members continued their demonstration for some time.

“We had a good time... it didn’t go as expected.”

The Munich press chose not to report on the demonstration, to not give Neo-Nazis attention or a platform. The Communist party had tried to use the event to give attention to their own organization as well, by holding their own pro-Communism rally. The AG party missed out on the show.

AG prides themselves on following a history of antifascist generalism. They follow their ancestors of the AG/R organization by accepting and organizing a diversity of political beliefs opposed to fascism. However, their divorce from the Communist party has severely limited the strength of the organization. The party is young. They do not know how to organize. I greatly admire their morals of being completely anti-fascism in every form, but the political beliefs of some of the individual members prioritize nation over individual, and tip on the edge of fascism. Other members, who are more aware of the fascist creep, simply lack the voice to make a difference. AG is a non-hierarchical organization; therefore no one is in charge. This makes it difficult to organize protests, or make realistic action, because there is no one making decisions. In a storm there is no collective voice, just a lot of noise.

Black Rat Collective

Following my interview conversation chit chat with Xandra, she invited me to a show at a venue I had never been before. Gelab Orange, or in English, Yellow Orange. She said it was through the Black Rat Collective, who throw shows there the first Friday of every month. Even just the name of the Black Rat Collective intrigued me, when I asked what the collective was. She told me that they are a music collective, who also used to have a magazine, but now mostly focus on supporting local musicians. The mention was intriguing, as at this time I had not yet read much modern antifa literature. I was motivated to make the event and pursue research on the Black Rat Collective.

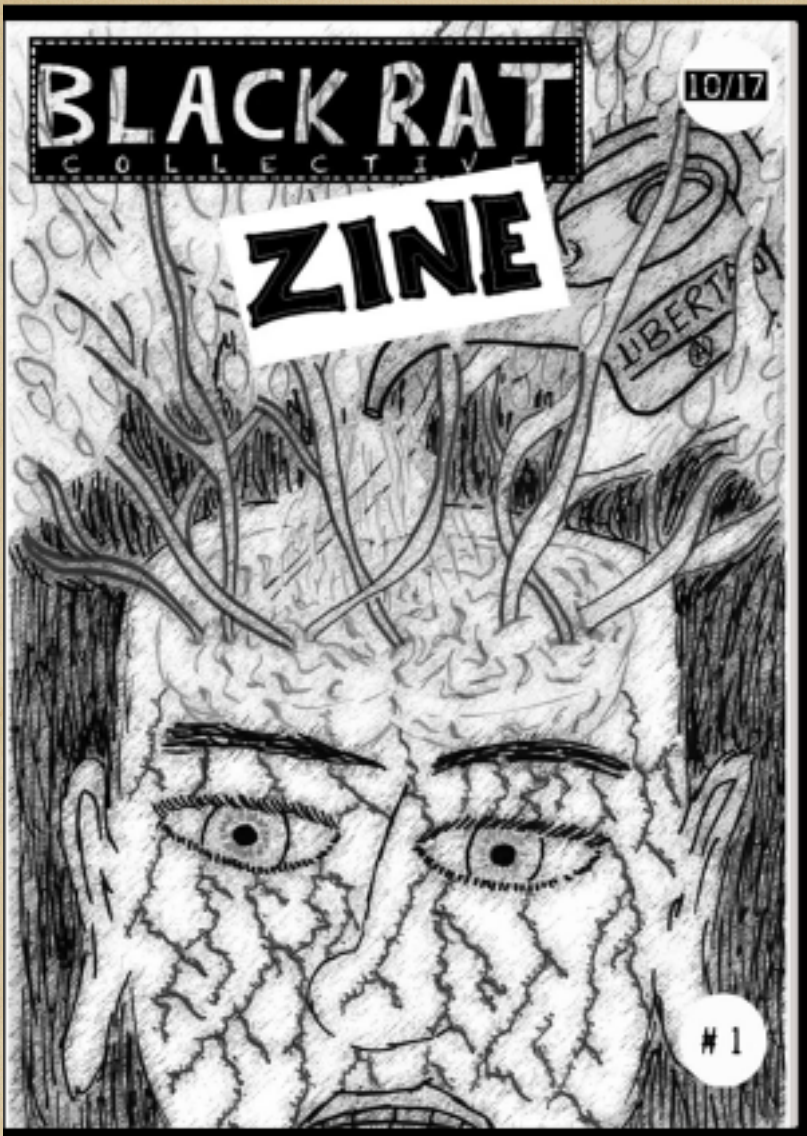
Opening the Black Rat Collective page for the first time I was met with the following image. Exploring the blog, I discovered they had a podcast as well as a magazine. Unfortunately, I was unable to listen to any of the podcasts, as the weblinks seemed to no longer be operational.



On the application page for the magazine, a block of text states clearly that all contributions are welcome, suggesting the Black Rat Collective has an identity similar to AG; open to all political ideas as long as they are against fascism.



The first issue of the magazine came out in October of 2017, and is it beautiful. A sacred construction of political and artistic elements to educate, unify and organize the far left. The art pieces intertwining the political sentiments capture the emotions of individuals living in these times, seeking action, fighting to write the story of their future. In the first issue issue there is one article where an artist has mashed together a collage of all the recent instances of anarchy in newspapers. A display of their power. A sentiment of strength and togetherness. Action can make real change. (Black Rat Zine #1).





-Freizeit 81 Article

Fascism and the Patriarchy Article -

Ich nenne es FEMINISMUS.

Ich bin die Frau.

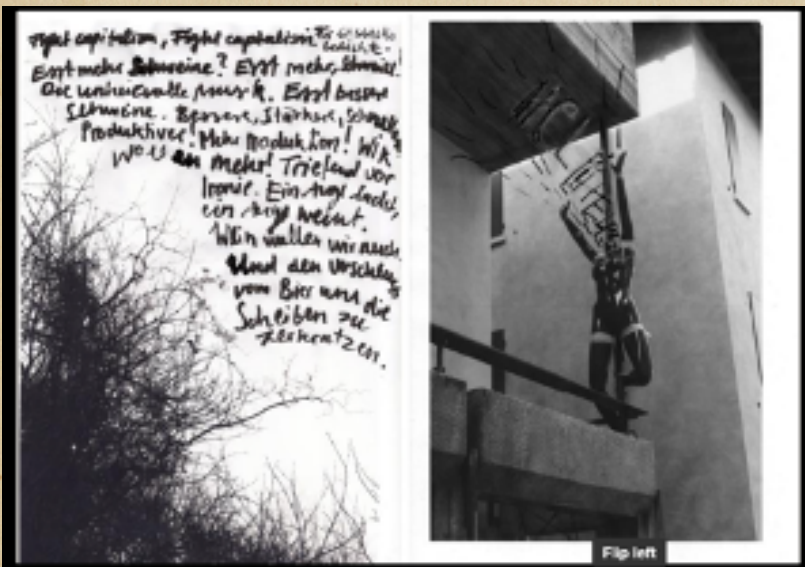
Ich bin die Frau, die nicht nur die Frau ist, sondern die Frau, die die Welt verändert hat. Ich bin die Frau, die die Welt verändert hat, die die Welt verändert hat, die die Welt verändert hat.

Mein Feminismus hat andere Ursprünge. Mein Feminismus hat andere Ursprünge, als der Feminismus der Männer. Mein Feminismus hat andere Ursprünge, als der Feminismus der Männer. Mein Feminismus hat andere Ursprünge, als der Feminismus der Männer.

Das bedeutet für mich über meine Identität als Frau zu sprechen. Das bedeutet für mich über meine Identität als Frau zu sprechen. Das bedeutet für mich über meine Identität als Frau zu sprechen.

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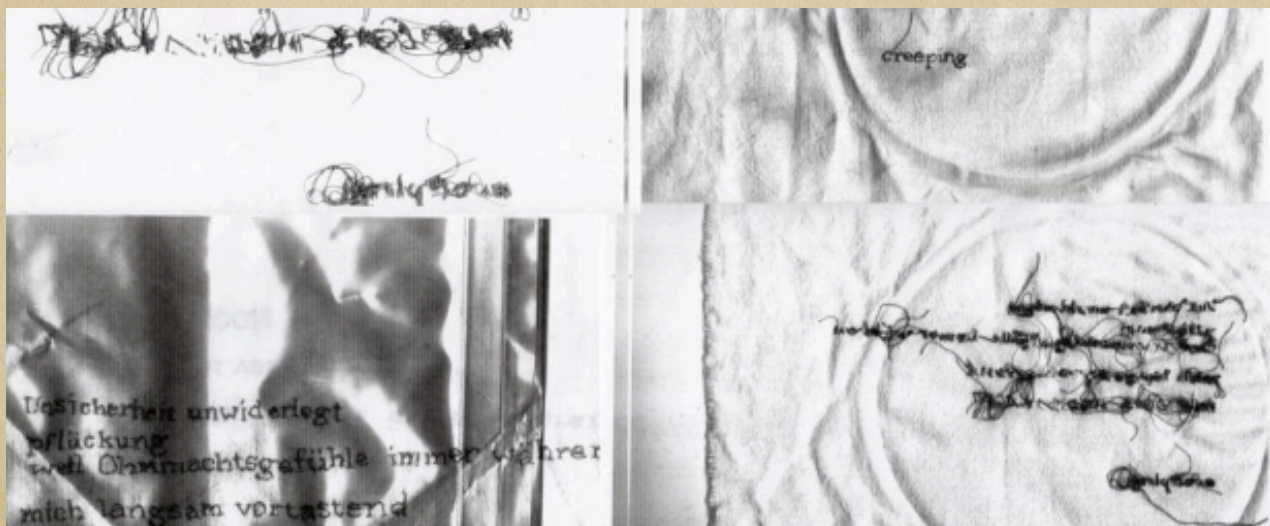


-Poetry

Unfortunately, as the publications continued into 2019 and 2020, political articles became more infrequent. Most of the articles focused on local bands, and tactics of wholistic living. The final magazine was published in January of 2020, with only the aesthetic of antifa.

Black Rat operates as music collective, separate from politics. I went to some of their shows. The music was fantastic, although the ghosts of political action lurking around us were haunting. The Black Rat Collective was able to organize in a way that AG had been unsuccessful. They had educated their members in how to avoid falling for fascist ideas. They educated their members on the history of antifascist organizations. Their voices were heard in the German media. But then they disappeared.

The disappearance of the political aspect of the Black Rat Collective continues to be a mystery. Xandra attempted to connect me with people who may have more information, but all these interviews fell short. It's as if those who were responsible for the magazine disappeared. The early days of Black Rat Collective serves as an example for how anarchy can be successful in achieving the status of a political party. The decay of Black Rat Collective serves as an example for how anarchy can fall apart into, well anarchy.



Munich Anarchist Chapter Conclusion

Following the sudden disappearance of Black Rat Collective, AG has prevailed as the primary Anarchist organization in Munich, into the 2020s. I admire AG for following the history of their ancestors; AG/R, and building their organization on the founding principle of inclusively against fascism. However, AG is without the strength or means to fight fascism to the extent necessary in making change. A young and naive population, members of AG do not have a complete understanding of anarchist literature, history, or organizational tactics. Those who do have knowledge, are without power within the anti-hierarchical structure of the organization.

The Black Rat Collective was able to be more successful in organizing anarchists in an antifa movement, by motivating people to educate themselves through their emotions. Utilizing the artistic and often outsider communities of artist, Black Rat Collective grew as a combined artistic and political movement. With a magazine, they were able to share ideas freely among the organization, unifying members against fascism.

The violent characterization of antifa by the modern news media is an obvious lie, when made aware of the personalities of these individuals and information on their organizations. Neither AG nor the Black Rat Collective promoted violence. In all reality, anarchist-antifa is currently no threat to the state of fascism in the world. They are lost, distant, divided, and disorganized. However, as long as the tradition of fighting fascism is alive, the agenda of overturning fascism can be followed, and change is possible.

To antifascists of North America, there is much to learn from the actions of these anarchist organizations. Firstly, antifa is more powerful when defined generally, to allow a larger range of political identities to cooperate, including Communists. Secondly, educating members on the history and literature of antifa unites the body over the agenda of fighting fascism, and keeps the members from falling for fascist ideas themselves. Third, fixation on all the grief and

hardship in the world, can traumatize members to the extent they become nihilist; focus on making change relevant to you and your area of living. Fourth, music and artist communities are important in organizing people in spaces to discuss political action but cannot distract from the political agenda. Finally, change is possible, and your voice makes a difference.



**Munich Communist
Chapter**

Hauptquartier Introduction

Following my initial meeting of members of the Munich Communist Party, through conversation with Evi and Nora at Marat, I was eager to discover whether their political views and personalities were representative of the larger Munich Communist Party.

Meetings for the Communist Party were held at a space twenty minutes walking from Marat called Hauptquartier (HQ), “headquarters” in English, ironically enough. The organizational methods of the Communist Party were directly contrasting from AG.

AG focused on uniting a diversity of political beliefs under the antifascism umbrella. At Hauptquartier (HQ) there are ten different political organizations, separated by their distinct focuses on single issue politics. There is a Communist Group, a Feminist Group, an Environmental Group, an affordable housing group, an anti-police group, and more sharing the space at Hauptquartier (HQ). From my experiences attending a variety of different meetings, I learned that many of the members are married to one specific group and only attend other meetings to ensure the perspective of their main group’s focus is being heard. Members of different single-issue groups had varying levels of communist commitment, but all collectively lean towards the communist side of the antifa coin. Members of the Munich Communist party (KPD) define themselves as Communist because they believe Communism can work for German society. The specific “Communist Group” is exclusively focused on how to institute communism in Germany, while other groups operate within communist literature, but focus on other issues. As Mark Bray writes in the antifa handbook, antifascism is not a single-issue organization (Mark Bray, XVI). The political agendas of these single-issue groups collectively form the network of an antifascist organization.

The first meeting I attended was organized by the anti-police group at HQ. I arrived with my friend Nora, who had been active across many of the HQ groups for some time but was primarily involved in the anti-police and Communist meetings. Nora along with a fellow Communist comrade, Sam, were the presenters of the meeting. Nora explained to me that the presenters follow a schedule, allowing all members to present on a topic or issue when it is their turn. Having a schedule of presenters is organized, while still being non-hierarchical and fair. Unlike AG, where most presenters are from outside Munich, limiting the voices of individual members.

We all sat in a circle of chairs, facing each other, encouraging more feelings of conversation than the classroom energy of AG meetings. Looking at the people sitting around me, I began comparing them to AG members. Like AG, most of the members were young, around their early twenties, with a few older members ranging from 30s-60s scattered amongst them. The Communist men were nerdy. Little effort or attention was put into how they dressed, sweatpants and so on, material seemed casual, they rather valued other things. Women mixed the traditional Communist attire with fantastic patterns and fabrics and furs. Class; compared to the men, and the punk roughness of AG members. Comrades were chatting and laughing in a giddy grand time. Sipping tea and eating cookies provided by the party. A friend group.

First Communist meeting. I was feeling shy. Everyone seemed to know each other so well, on such a deep level, it was intimidating. Reminiscent of high school parties and nervous awkward interactions with the popular kids. Only if I went to high school in Soviet Russia. The décor of HQ was tastefully designed. The walls were lined with wood panels, detailed with little red stars, filled in-between with images of Communist Figures, Cesar Chavez being the most popular. On one wall space was waving a gigantic tapestry of the hammer and sickle emblem.

One by one, everyone began introducing themselves in German. An icebreaker of sorts, but I could not understand what anyone was saying, and did not know what the question was. In innocent anxiety, my heartbeat faster as it grew closer to my turn to speak. The type of anxiety you get when you were caught not paying attention in class, or your middle school crush shows up unexpectedly at a school dance.

When it was my turn, I stared blankly for a brief moment, while Nora came to my rescue, whispering in my ear, “name and what group you are in.”

Unsure of how to respond, I said “Hi my name is Willow I am from Canada” in a strong American accent.

Unlike the suspicion of my presence by AG members, no one at HQ seemed bothered, or even surprised by my attendance. As I later came to understand, Nora was good friends with many if not all the members and being alongside them brought acceptance from the others. For the first time, I felt as if I had befriended a popular kid and was finally meeting all the “cool kids.”

A Book Club. My first Communist meeting, led by Nora and Sam, was a discussion about a book from a Berlin author, telling the origin story of the German police. The author was coming to HQ the week after next to expand on the context of the book. I cannot share the name of the book or author, as she directly requested for me not to use them in our later interview. For reference purposes I will call this book “History of German Police” and the author “Diana.”

I had not read “History of German Police” before attending the meeting, while most of the members had brought along their personal copies. Luckily, the meeting started with Nora and Sam presenting their findings from the book.

The presentation was in German. However, I used the transcribing function on Google translate, and was able to read the English translation live as they were speaking. Transcriptions were not perfect; however, I was able to piece together most of what was being said and had the opportunity to ask Nora for clarification on

some specifics after the meetings. Quotations in the following sections are taken directly from screenshots of the transcriptions.

Nora gave background information on the author, Diana. Diana grew up in Hamburg, in Cold War-British Zone of Occupation. Her experiences living under western powers inspired her first interest in Communism. Following the unification of Germany, Diana moved to Berlin in the early 1990s. Young in her 20s, Diana connected with the reemerging Communist party in Berlin. The group reclaimed the legacy of the KPD; the German Communist party organizing in 1945, before being consumed by the Soviets.

While living in Berlin into the early 2000s, Diana wrote "History of German Police," as a way of educating KPD members on the fascist origins of their enemy. The book has sense been updated, in wake of police violence in the United States and the emergence of the BLM movement.

Following Nora's background description of the book. Sam began diving into its contents.

"Diana eröffnet das Buch mit der Abscheulichkeit der deutschen Polizei im Jahr 1945 (Diana opens the book with the abomination of the German police in 1945)" - Sam

Following WWII, union powers in East Germany began a community policing organization called the Deutsche Volkspolizei, (The People's Police) (DVP). The DVP was a grassroots organization, with good intentions. They were focused on properly executing a policing system perfect of Democratic Communism. In their early years, the DVP dealt with, regular criminal activity (theft, murder, so on). They ignored their West German Neighbors. The Police in West Germany at this time, reported to Allied Powers, and were in the early stages of the Cold War epic. Soviet presence increased slowly in the East. In 1949, Soviet Russia officially claimed East Germany as a state within the Warsaw pact. East Germany was then known as the German Democratic Republic.

Soviets became dominant of policing in East Germany.

“Der Anstand der DVP ging verloren, als, Stassi die KPD schluckte.” (The DVP’s decency was lost when the Stassi “swallowed” up the KPD). –Nora

The Stassi (Ministry of the State Security) was the child of an un-consensual marriage between the DVP and Soviet Party. Ranking officials of the Stassi reported directly to the KGB, allowing East German to be the Soviet’s puppet in political war against Allied Powers. Tactics of subverting the strength of the KPD involved ruining the economy of East Germany. The KPD became disorganized through rapidly increasing inflation and unemployment.

Sam spoke to how Diana suggests the KPD model of Union power policing, is ideal for a Communist society, because it gives the people direct power over police policy and action.

“Im KPD-Modell wählten die Gewerkschaftsmitglieder die Polizeichefs direkt. Das derzeitige Ernennungssystem für Polizei und Demokratie funktioniert nicht (In the KPD model, union members directly elected police chiefs. The current police and democracy appointment system is not working)“ – Sam

The KPD is now illegal in Germany. Germany has sense had a policing model typical of Capitalist Democracies, such as their American and British influences. However, Germany has taken significant steps in limiting influences of capitalism on policing, such as making private prisons illegal.”

Nora described how Diana says these policy changes have not been enough in her book History of German Police.

“Deutschland ist stolz darauf, im Vergleich zu Amerika eine fortschrittliche Politik zu verfolgen. Dies ermöglicht es ihnen, mit der Unterdrückung von Minderheiten durchzukommen, gewalttätige Taktiken anzuwenden und sich gegenseitig in einem Machtsystem zu unterstützen, in dem die Menschen Mitspracherecht haben.

(Germany prides itself on pursuing progressive policies compared to America. This allows them to get away with oppressing minorities, using violent tactics, and supporting each other in a system of power where people have (no) say.)”

Nora further elaborated on how the influence of Capitalism on modern police has protected the police from being overthrown by the people and has led to an oppressive and authoritative capitalist state.

“Sofern das Volk die Polizei nicht direkt ernennt, kann die Polizeimoral gekauft und verkauft werden. Sie verkaufen uns, sie dienen uns nicht. (Unless the people directly appoint the police, police morale can be bought and sold. They sell us, they don't serve us.)”

Following Sam and Nora's presentation on Diana's "History of the German Police," the group of Communists began the discussion phase of their meeting. One at a time, comments were raised while one of Nora's friends recorded minutes, again enforcing fairness to every aspect of the meeting.

Some members had more to say than others, but everyone chimed in at some point, besides myself, who was shyly observing and taking notes.

The conversation came to a point where they began making a list of questions to ask Diana upon her visit to HQ next week. Nora recorded the list of questions on a white board. Some of the questions were about the contents of History of German Police, asking for further elaboration or details. However, most of the questions were focused on political organization, and Diana's experience in Berlin's Communist chapter. Notable questions:

“Wie können wir das derzeitige Polizeisystem abschaffen? (How can we abolish the current policing system?)“

“Welche Maßnahmen können wir gegen Polizeigewalt ergreifen zum Schutz von Minderheiten Gruppen, die am stärksten von Polizeigewalt betroffen sind (What measures can we take to protect minority groups who are most affected by police violence?)”

“Wie sah die bürgernahe Polizeiarbeit in den Berliner Kommunen während Ihrer Zeit dort aus? (What was community policing like in Berlin Communes during your time there?)”

The meeting ended with an attitude of motivation, inspiration to act. I felt optimistic that HQ goers had not fallen for the same mistakes as AG. My initial impression was that Munich Communists were more organized and effective in executing their ideas, than the Anarchists. However, I was still unclear on the agenda of the HQ members as a whole, as the different subgroups seemed to have such varying agendas. Going into next week's meeting, I was looking to learn more about the organizational structure and overarching goals of German Communists, and how these factors compare to those of AG and Antifa as a whole.

Fighting for Council Communism

Returning to HQ the following Friday, I was curious to hear Diana respond to the questions put together by members of the Munich Communist Party. However, I was more intrigued to learn more about the operational dynamics and foreseeable goals of the Party.

Stepping foot into the Communist space for the second time, the air smelled more formal and academic than it did before. Instead of filling the atmosphere with the chatter of a close friend group, members were sitting quietly. Instead of the chairs organized in a unified, equal circle. The chairs were positioned towards the front of the room in lecture style. Diana sat at the front, sleek black hair with gold earring, dark dim black eyes staring over a pair of wide framed glasses. The space seemed to be interrupted by a figure of status, breaking the attitude of equality and fairness of HQ, Diana's demeanor argued her authority over the rest of the members.

The meeting began with Diana introducing herself as the author of *History of the German Police*, but perhaps more importantly as a “lehrerin” (teacher) of Communist values. Reading

this from my phone translator, I was curious to learn about these values she was speaking of. As a figure of profound wisdom and Communist experience, she seemed to be just the person to answer my questions. But first, the attending members of this HQ meeting were to ask their own questions of Diana.

An older face in the crowd of Communists asked the first question from the list. “

“Wie können wir das derzeitige Polizeisystem abschaffen? Was ist ein guter Weg, gegen die Polizei zu protestieren, damit wir die institutionelle Gewalt, die sie gegen die Gesellschaft ausübt, loswerden können? (How can we abolish the current policing system? What is a good way to protest against the police so that we can get rid of the institutional violence they exercise against society?”

Hungry for radical change. This first question portrayed the class of HQ Communists sitting around me as tired of hearing of the stress and chaos of society, and ready to take action. Motivated for takeover, tired of waiting, Communism is now! Diana chuckled, a break of tension in the room.

“Community Policing ist möglich. Wir können Änderungen am aktuellen System vornehmen. In Deutschland können wir die Demokratie zu unserem Vorteil nutzen und unsere eigenen Mitglieder in das System einschleusen, um es von innen heraus zu zerreißen. Wir dürfen die Kraft unserer Stimme nicht vergessen. In Berlin konnten wir zur politischen Macht aufsteigen, weil wir dieses gemeinsame Ziel hatten. Ich würde sagen, dass Proteste gegen die Polizei, ich weiß es nicht, die Polizei immer gewinnt, das sehen wir in Amerika und überall sonst. Sie haben die Gewalt auf ihrer Seite. Aber mit Wahlen können wir Veränderungen herbeiführen, das ist etwas, was Amerika nicht hat. Aber unser Polizeisystem muss besser werden (Community policing is possible. We can make changes to the current system. In Germany we can use democracy to our advantage and inject our own members into the system to tear it apart from within... ..forget the power of our voice. In Berlin we

were able to rise political power because we had this common goal. I would say that anti-police protests, I don't know, the police always win, we see that in America and everywhere else. They have the violence on their side. But with elections we can create change, which is something America doesn't have. But our police system needs to get better...)"

Diana continued her response by listing some of the institutional changes necessary in creating a fair policing system, mimicking the structure and policies of the former DVP. However, her difference in perspective to the HQ members had already been demonstrated. The Communists had assumed that a takeover of some kind was necessary in overthrowing the current policing system. Diana was critical of this idea, arguing that the police will always physically dominate any attempts of overthrow, or anarchy. She is instead suggesting that through Germany's democratic process, Communists can elect their members to county chief administrations, who elect police chiefs within the federal states. Although I found this answer reassuring, as being more realistic, it still fostered additional questions I hoped to ask her.

"How can Munich Communists gain democratic power when Communism has become such a taboo in Germany? How can they realistically win an election when the left is so divided, and Communists are so few in numbers?

Diana responded to some follow up questions about community policing, much of which had been covered already in the previous meeting, my attention was again drawn when a question came up regarding the institution of Communist values into a police force.

"Wie können wir sicherstellen, dass die von uns eingesetzten Polizeikräfte nicht korrumpiert werden? Wie stellen wir sicher, dass die Menschen immer Macht über die Polizei haben und nicht umgekehrt? (How can we ensure that (our) police are not corrupted? How do we give people power over the police and not the other way around?)"

Diana first responded with a question.

“Wie verhindern wir, dass eine Regierung korrupt wird? Alle Machthaber können beeinflusst werden. Wenn man so will, laufen alle Ratten zum Käse. Die Polizei muss vom Rat verwaltet werden. Wir werden unsere eigenen gewählten Gremien bilden, sobald wir an der Macht sind, sobald sich die Menschen politisch der Notwendigkeit des Rätekommunismus bewusst werden. Arbeiter werden die Macht der Polizei überprüfen. “How do we prevent a government from becoming corrupt? All those in power can be influenced. If you will, all rats run to cheese. The police must be managed by the council. We will form our own elected bodies as soon as we are in power, as soon as people become politically aware of the need for council communism. Workers will check the power of the police.”

Masked underneath the guise of this question about police, Diana had revealed her thought process on how to institute Communism in Germany. She is arguing that Communism first needs to utilize the corrupt nature of the German democratic process to take elected power, and then institute council communism, where union parties have direct power over public policy and everything involved in ruling a country.

However, with every bite of new knowledge, and understanding of the German Communist party, I was left with further questions.

In attempt to build more answers off of what I had learned in this HQ meeting, I approached Diana following her presentation, which continued for quite some time as the Communists picked and pried at the details of her book.

I didn't record this conversation, but this is basically how it went;

“Hi there, thank you for your presentation, I really learned a lot.”

“Hi what's your name.”

“Um, Willow, it's nice to meet you.”

“Hi, Willow, you didn’t ask a question during the Q and A.”

“Ya, um my German is not very good I-“

“Did you understand anything?”

“Ya I have got my little translator.”

“Ok, have a good night,”

“Im sorry I just wanted to ask if I could maybe ask a few questions?”

Diana turned back to me, with an irritated expression on her face.

“I am a journalist from Vancouver, um just writing an article about my experience here in Germany.”

“Willow, here, we have our own journalists, let us tell our own story.”

“I understand its just that-“

“No no I don’t want anything about me out there unless I know where it’s going.”

“Ok ok ya, I understand that, have a good night, Diana.”

Diana turned back away from me to whisper in German to another person.

Her response to my interview ask was frustrating and a bit harsh, but I suppose I understood where she was coming from. She did not know who I was, or if I would mistakenly, or purposely, misinterpret her words or ideas. Although I still used content from her meeting, out of respect for her, I changed her name and the name of her book.

Diana’s voice rang of reason. Her knowledge of the history and functioning of Council Communism was compelling. She was fighting for the ideas of Communism, through the system of democratic process. She believed that the current capitalist state could be dismantled, through the long tough grind of political organization. I admired her perspective and found it refreshingly more realistic than the brash and naive protests of anarchist parties. HQ members had a plan, they truly believed in ideas of Council Communism, and were fighting to make it happen. However, I

began to wonder if digging into the agenda and goals of HQ Communists, had gotten me off track of the focus of this piece. Diana was not planning political action as part of antifa, but purely as a Communist. Members of the Communist Munich party consider themselves antifascist, because of their obvious leftist ideologies, however, they are much more invested in instituting Council Communism, than they are in fighting fascism. With this understanding, it seemed as if HQ members had wandered so far from the origins of Antifa unity with AA/BO and more recent AG/R, that it was difficult to even consider them as antifa.

International Security Conference Protest

A few weeks went by, where I had become occupied with more of the AG meetings, and other life events and expectations. Now in early December, I returned to HQ finally, with Nora. Rather than being a book club, or presentation like my last two meetings, we were attending a protest organization against the annual International Security Conference (ISC).

The International Security Conference is also known as the Munich Security Conference because it takes place in Munich every February. "Heads of state and government, ministers of defense and foreign affairs as well as leading figures from academia, business and civil society... address the world's most pressing concerns" (securityconference.org.) In these chambers, world leaders discuss global conflicts and security concerns across the globe, aiming at finding solutions.

Nora gave me some background information on why the Communists were protesting the event. The Communists are first against the concept of the event because western capitalist countries are plotting on how to maintain their control in the constant global power struggle. With these countries working together, Communist ideas are squashed from conversation. Secondly, Nora claimed that Kamala Harris would be attending this year's conference, likely

cooperating with other foreign leaders to further sell weapons to Israel. In the eyes of these Western countries, Palestine, and the recent Hamas attacks were a threat to international security, and the maintenance of their capitalist, world order agenda. The third reason for their protest, was to attract attention to the Communist party, hopefully inspiring others to follow their cause and join their ranks.

At this meeting there were very few attending members compared to the other two I attended. Eight of us sat around a table. HQ was a non-hierarchical organization, but if there was a hierarchy, these members would be at the top of it. Nora introduced me to the few she knew closest. Levin, Marcus and Sophia. All three individuals seemed as if they had been attending Communist meetings for years, even though all three were in their early twenty's. They were comfortable in the space and seemed invested in my project. They even agreed to have the meeting in English and let me record audio of their discussion.

Levin grabbed some beers from the back of HQ and kindly gave me one. He was interesting because, despite his casual attire and nerdy demeanor, the man had tattoos all over his hands. On a second glance, I noticed that his hands were also mangled, bruised, and cut. Something or someone got beat by those hands. We had a brief "prost moment" and the meeting began.

Nora kept minutes. Around the table, everyone introduced themselves, and which subgroup they are representing. The circle then repeated, and everyone presented the goals of their subgroup. The feminists wanted to ensure that the fight against the patriarchy was represented, arguing that members of the ISC were content in the current state of female repression across the globe. Marcus from the environmental group argued Climate Change is the biggest security threat. Levin argued on behalf of the Communist group, and suggested the need to unify under the Communist identity.

"We need to brand ourselves so that people know we are Communist, they know our policies, we are against the police, against the patriarchy and everything we stand for... -Levin

“Yes like how will people identify us...” -Marcus

A female member I failed to properly meet chimed in asking.

“Have you seen the red army people from I think Frankfurt”

Nora interrupted excitedly, stomping her feet in glee, as the table erupted into giggles and chatter.

“Hamburg, yes they are so cool.”

The female member brought up a tiktok video, taking the tables attention. Emerging from spooky scary black and grey mist, a dozen or so figures marched in blood red uniforms. Matching red bandanas covered their faces. A German voice barked hauntingly in the background. The next video showed one of the members spinning a torch dramatically.

A spectacle. An advertising campaign. A recruitment tactic. By using tiktok, and portraying themselves a cool, rebellious, autonomous figures, fighting this underground political battle, drawing moths to their fight.

Those at the table were roused by the video. Talking to each other about how they should do something similar, building up to the ISC protest. Bouncing off ideas in authentic creative collaboration.

Levin’s voice stood out, as he asked a direct question

“What is the status with our social media.... Uhh operations?”

An older face at the table, mid-thirties, long long long brown hair spoke up.

“We were posting our events, and stuff on Instagram, we had someone...”

“Michell?” – Nora

“ya maybe, we stopped, I think maybe she just got busy.”

“Like also though, I don’t know with like Instagram, we never know who could show up.” -Marcus

“It’s a big risk” – teenager who brought up the tiktok video.

“Right, maybe we like stay off posting when we are meeting, or any of that stuff, and make an account just for the protest...we want to get out as many people as possible.” - Levin

Nora of course offered to help make some of the content. Finding another role in HQ, Deeping their Communist involvement. I too offered my editing services, although I fully understood that I would not be in town long enough or have the free time to fulfil my word.

“I think also just like physical flyers are important.” – Levin

“Fucking plaster all over the city.” -Nora

“Communism rocks” -Marcus

“We should have posters for different like calls of action.” –

Unknown voice

Poster slogans and ideas began spewing across the table. Until the oldest face at the table, with the long long brown hair, called for some organization.

“Hey hey hey maybe lets go around the table and pitch our ideas.”

Nora began recording minutes again, as one by one the eight members pitched their different slogan ideas for the protest advertising posters. Most of the ideas were intrinsically tied to the subgroup each member represented. The anti-police representative suggested a “abolish the police slogan.” Marcus from the environmental group suggested a slogan saying something about climate change being the biggest threat to international security. Long long-haired lady record all the suggested options onto a whiteboard. All were in German, and it was difficult for me to fully understand what the suggested slogans were without my translator. Despite this, the HQ members allowed me to participate in the voting process, I nervously peered around the room to see what other people were voting for, and joined in on the obvious favorite option in the room. Everyone besides Marcus, voted for the option:

“Der Kapitalismus ist die größte Bedrohung für die Freiheit” translating to “Capitalism is the greatest threat to freedom. Marcus’s concern with this option, was that it does not effectively communicate the identity of HQ, and could be mistaken as a slogan for the far right groups, who apparently will be holding their own

protest against the ISC. To end the meeting the faces around the table at HQ agreed to add a tagline “Schließen Sie sich den kommunistischen Protesten an” or “Join the Communist protests.”

Although the meeting ended without significant organizational efforts towards making this protest happen, I had spent nearly three hours at HQ that evening, in between lengthy proposals and long breaks of debate and chatter. In their organizational process, HQ members wanted to ensure that every voice was heard, everything was considered, and their morals of fairness were followed through every step. The protest was not taking place for months, and I was confident that every detail would be in place by the time the protest came around. HQ members organized protests with an attitude directly opposite of AG. While AG was rushed, and spontaneous in their fight against fascism, HQ was meticulously planning their Communist attack.

Heads or Tails

A brief conversation with Levin near the end of the night, prompted significant characterization of Antifa individuals, deserving of it's own section. The expected presence of Nazi's at the ISC conference intrigued me. Our conversation began when I asked after the meeting “why are Nazi's assembling? Are they protesting us or are we protesting them?”

Although I did not record this conversation, following my notes from the meeting, I recall Levin telling me the Neo Nazi groups were also protesting the ISC conference. The situational elements of both anti-fascist and fascist groups protest the same government event, represents the similarity in philosophy between the groups. Upon further questions, Levin described how the Neo Nazi groups were upset Germany was accepting large populations of refugees from eastern Europe, and the Middle East. They were upset the population of Germany was becoming more diverse. They were upset the identity of Germany was changing, core to their fascist beliefs of preserving “traditional and national purity.”

I asked Levin why he thought some people grow up to become antifascist and some fascists, speaking to the linear philosophy of both groups protesting against the government. Levin responded by telling me about how everyone feels the burden of capitalism, whether or not they realize it. Anti-fascist and fascists both are struggling in society. It is difficult to find fulfilling work, food, housing all the essentials are becoming more expensive, the saturation of democracy makes people feel like they do not have a voice. Fascists choose to blame immigrants, minorities, and progressive polices for tainting the racial and cultural purity of their societies. Anti-fascists blame the government, in the case of Communists they blame capitalism. People, are motivated to find their place on either side, based on the development of their world view. Levin's argument is a determinist idea, but fairly recognizes the influences of society in shaping political groups outside the party system.

I asked Levin if he felt there was any hope in convincing Neo-Nazi's to join the Antifascist movement. He was offput by even the idea, arguing that because Neo- Nazi's ideas are designed to hurt people, to oppress people, they must be met with a fist rather than an open hand. The Communists would be protesting the Neo-Nazi's just as fiercely as the ISC. This is war. They expect the Nazis to do the same.

Nora Final Goodbye

By my final moments in Munich, Nora and I had grown to become good friends. Between the Communist meetings and music at Kafe Marat, we had spent quite a bit of time together, often getting drinks and exploring more of the city with other friends. Before saying goodbye, we recorded one final interview to recap this section on my history, but she goes on today living her life as Munich Communist. We sat at this bar in Munich called Alte Ulting, the bar is a boat on a bridge. For just over an hour and a half, we talked.

Some of the moments from this conversation capture the essence of anti-fascist communist, and Nora's personal ideas.

"Thank you so much again, for being a voice in this project. It means a lot." -W

"I think it's really cool you're doing this... We are here doing what we know to do. I hope you can take something home and... uh ya we are all working together." -N

"All over the world." -W

"All over the world ya." -N

"Where does the fight against fascism go from here? What are the next steps for Munich Communists?" -W

"It continues. Everything we do is against fascism. The way of life everything, the way we see people in the world... We have protests planned, there is always more action... we live outside capitalism with our friends and I think that's what we will always be doing."

"After I leave what will you be doing?" -W

"I will still be doing this. I graduate soon.... But always I'm going to be at Haptquartier and living my life outside of the capitalist system... I'm outside now, of like normal life. There is no getting back in." -N

"Once you have seen this side" -W

"Yes, but where would I want to be? My friends are here. My friends are my friends because we all want to change things.... We are so close. I don't even have a phone, I can't get back in, I am devoted to this." -N

"What does antifa mean to you?" -W

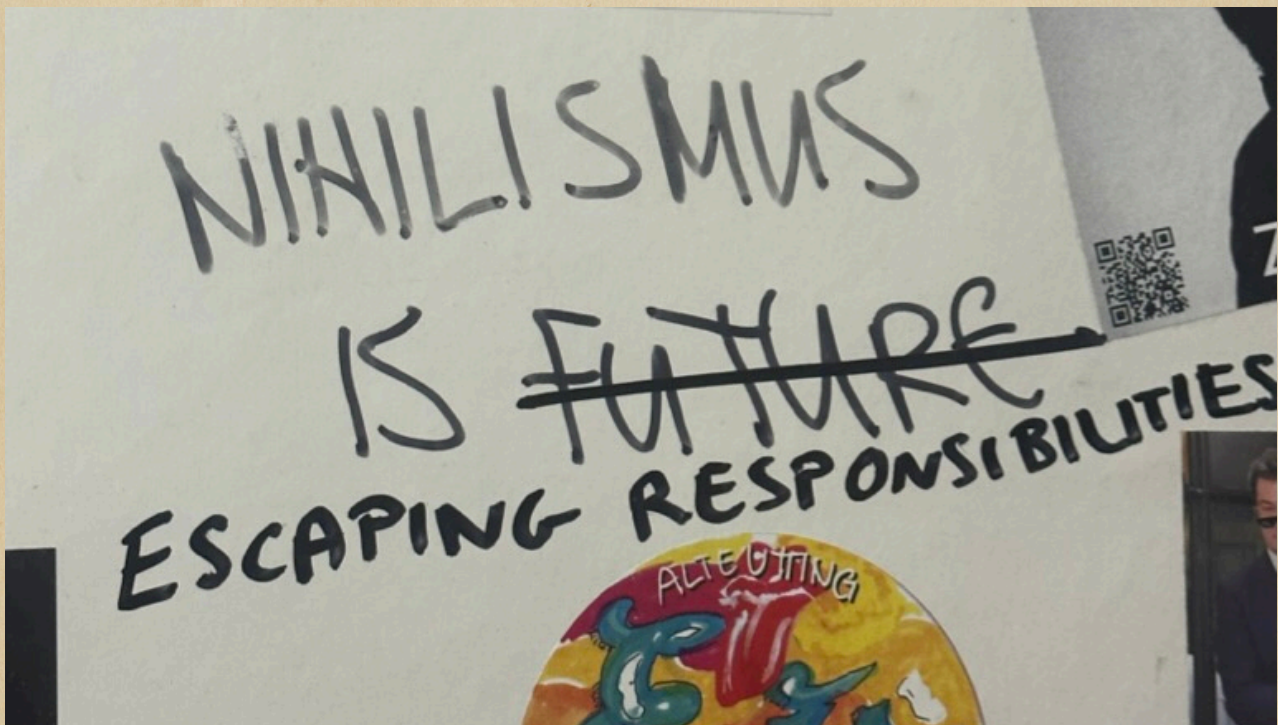
"Antifa means a lot of things... People use it as a label. The left tries to organize with it, they use it as a sign they are left. Antifa to me becomes so disconnected... I try not to get attached to identify, we want to live in a better world, where the people, the workers are given back the power. Fascism tries to stop that. We live in fascism... So, I guess I am antifascist for being against the way things are right now, for believing in change." -N

“What does Communism mean to you?” -W

Communism is not so...philosophical I guess, it's not what Communism means to me it's what it could mean to the world... It is better and I believe in Communism... I follow Karl Marx and the KPD when it was good. I think people need to do more to learn what Communism really is.”-N

Why inspires you to give so much of your life to supporting Communism?” – W

“I believe it can work. That is what makes anyone a Communist, we believe it is possible to live without capitalism, where everyone is truly equal, and has a voice... In Germany it is really and, people obviously in Munich especially really don't like Communism. But um when I'm old, I owe it to the young people to be on the right side of history. I need to know, I need them to know, that I did the right thing and I fought for what I believed in. I fought for them, and I fight for them. What's the point of living if you do not surround you whole life with what you believe in.”



**Concluding Thoughts
(Love To All My
Antifa Friends)**

Concluding Thoughts (Love To All My Antifa Friends)

Antifa is a labeling term for far-left political groups. To be anti-fascist, is to fight against fascism in any form. To be antifascist is to take responsibility for the future, and fight for the change you want to see in the world.

Antifa is a threat to western establishment. Antifa are portrayed as extreme terrorists, because fascist media outlets want people to think it is extreme to take political action. They want people to be numb and dissociated from what is going in the world.

In Munich, Antifa is divided between Anarchists and Communists. This divide follows the cyclical nature of fascism. As soon as the left believe fascism is dead, they break up and pursue individual agendas, forgetting their responsibility to prevent politics of national and racial purity. Fascism comes back, and we are seeing this now with the rise of the AFD party in Munich.

I admire members of both AG and HQ political parties for taking the responsibility of political action. AG represents the integral connection between music and politics, utilizing community spaces to educate members on the threats of fascism across the world. HQ communists represent the necessary devotion and organization to be successful in political action, with their nonhierarchical structure and detail orientation.

Love to all of the friends I made during this time in my life. You all showed me that political action is possible. You inspire me to create change, to fight for something bigger than myself. Thank you for opening your doors.

Here back in Vancouver, we must learn to unite against the greater evil of fascism. In Munich, antifascists utilize local music venues to organize politically. We can do the same. In Munich, punk music is connected to a responsibility of fighting fascism. We can do the same. We can combine art and politics to communicate to our followers like the anarchists I encountered. We can create a non-hierarchical meeting space like the communists I encountered. Antifa is a global movement, believing in a better future. Fighting fascism, here in Vancouver, we can be a part of this global responsibility.

Appendix A- People

Saul- AG member, frequent at Marat. Introduced me to AG and ideas of anarchy in Munich.

Kahla- AG member, frequent at Marat. Introduced me to AG and ideas of anarchy in Munich.

Evi- Munich Communist, frequent at Marat. Introduced to me to the division between Anarchists and Communists in Munich.

Nora- Munich Communist, frequent at Marat. Introduced me to the division of Anarchists and Communists in Munich. Member of anti-police and pro-Communist groups at HQ. My guide to Communism in Munich and a dear friend.

Jacob- Bartender at Marat. Ranking member of AG, and anarchist scholar.

Xandra- AG member and organizer. Also, a member for the former Black Rat Collective.

Sam- Munich Communist, member and presenter of the anti-police party at HQ.

Marcus- Munich Communist, member and presenter of the save the environment party at HQ.

Sophia- Munich Communist, member and presenter of the fight the patriarchy party at HQ.

Levin- Member of the Munich Communist party and Communist scholar.

Appendix B- Places and Parties

Marat Music and Restaurant– Autonomous Antifascist space. Music venue and organizing space for AG and other anarchists.

AG- Currently active “Anarchistische Gruppe” or “Anarchist Group” based in Munich Germany. Anarchist breakoff of the former AG/R, relative to AA “Antifashistische Aktion.”

AG/R- Former cohesive antifascist organization of Anarchists and Trotsky following Communists. Active from 1990s to early 2010s. Inspired by the original “Antifahsistishe Aktion.”

AA- “Antifashistishse Aktion.” The 1930s alliance between Communists and Social Democrats in response to Hitler’s rise to power. Origin of the red and black flag logo.

AfD- “Alternative for Germany.” Far right German political parties, focused on anti-immigration and nationalist policies.

Black Rat Collective– Music and Anti-Fascist collective organizing from 2017-2020. Implications of anarchist ideology, but especially notable for their ethos of anti-fascist generalization, for their live music, and for their prolific and artistic magazine “Black Rat Zine.”

HQ–“Hauptquartier” Communist Headquarters in Munich. Organizing space for various Communist groups in Munich. Associated with ideas of Council Communism, and the former KPD “Communist Party of Germany.”

KPD- “Communist Party of Germany.” Banned by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1956.

Appendix B- Places and Parties (continued)

DVP- “Deutsche Volkspolizei” or “The people’s police.” Union powered policing system from former East Germany.

Stassi- Ministry of the State Security for the Soviet Union in East Germany. Corrupted the DVP and KPD by oppressing German unions and waging political war against Allied Powers.

ISC- “International Security Conference.” Meeting in Munich of western political leaders to discuss the future of international security. Protested by both fascists and anti-fascists.

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