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### **PM PRESS PAMPHLET SERIES**

0001: BECOMING THE MEDIA: A CRITICAL HISTORY OF CLAMOR MAGAZINE By Jen Angel

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## INTRODUCTION

Thirty years ago, the world was a very different Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) place.

The division between “Communism” and “The Free West”—détente notwithstanding—marked each and every political conflict, as did the anti-colonial revolutions, which had by no means run their course.

Millions of people around the world felt that it was reasonable and worthwhile to risk their lives fighting for liberation from capitalism and imperialism. Goals which were defined as such. This global upheaval found its epicentre in the Third World, and yet its effects would leave no nation untouched. While in the wealthy imperialist countries these liberation wars were most evident in the 1960s, there remained pockets of resistance, subcultural remnants, people who remained willing to put their lives on the line, fighting for revolution right through the 1970s and 1980s.

This pamphlet is one short sideways glance at a single chapter in this general twentieth century conflagration. It is a look at the most intense campaign waged by a group which no longer exists—the Red Army Faction—in a country which technically no longer exists—West Germany—at a point in history where “everything not busy being born, was busy dying.” (with apologies to Bob Dylan).

The reasons for presenting this story are many.

First of all, those of us who are active on the left today operate within the same broad tradition as the people who risked and even lost their lives in 1977. If one cannot agree with all that the RAF did or said—to do so would mean closing our eyes to thirty years Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) of history—one can still recognize them as comrades. So in a sense, telling this tale is a matter of showing respect.

Secondly, there are lessons here. They may not be obvious, the forms of struggle are so very different now than they were in the seventies, but there are things that can be learned nevertheless. Questions of how to wage asymmetrical warfare, of what we mean by revolutionary morality, of what we risk when we underestimate our opponents. Perhaps most importantly, the story of the RAF can teach us that it is possible to not back down, to surpass our previous expectations, to Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) follow through on our most daring plans.

Unfortunately, many of the lessons to be learned from the RAF's struggle cannot be gleaned from 1977 alone. Interested readers are strongly advised to check out the upcoming two volume documentary history of the RAF that Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) is to be published later this year by PM Press

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and Kersplebedeb. (For more on these volumes, see the contact pages at the end of this pamphlet.)

There is one more obvious reason for looking back at the RAF and the “German Autumn.” This story has itself become politically relevant, as differing versions of what the RAF did and did not do, and what they did or did not think, have been imbued with symbolic importance for the new, 21st century, “united” Germany.

The year 2007 saw a glut of commemorations, ceremonies, and journalistic and scholarly retrospectives. Here the corpse of the RAF, and the memory of the dead on both sides, was put under a microscope as if we were assisting in an *Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation* (PM Pamphlet) autopsy. Generally, the tone was excessively self-congratulatory: “we” beat the disease, “we” put it behind us. The “disease” in question being armed resistance to the imperialist state.

Mere memories can of course be tantalizing, and in certain quarters it was suggested that the “best” moments (from the point of view of the state, of course) could be relived: new charges against former combatants, new investigations *Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation* (PM Pamphlet) into past assassinations, new repression against new radical movements too. More on this in the final section of this pamphlet.

Yet before we begin, a word is perhaps in order about the society in which all of this took place.

“West Germany,” the Federal Republic of Germany, was an anti-communist state set up after World War II to threaten the Soviet bloc, and around which imperialism hoped to (and succeeded in) rebuilding the West European economy. As part of this process, immediately after the war the capitalist Allies decided to make peace with former Nazis and their supporters, so long as they were willing to play ball with the new “democratic” masters. Throughout the late 40s, the 50s, and the 60s, many of the key positions of power in the FRG were held by men who had played similarly important roles in Hitler’s Third Reich.

As a substitute for any real denazification, religious and civil leaders simply repeated the mantra that the best way to make sure the crimes of the Nazi period would never happen again was for all Germans to concentrate on living “decent, law-abiding” lives. A message that would often be repeated by parents—not a few of whom had sieg heiling skeletons in their closets—to their children.

A stifling, authoritarian and conformist ideology was being imposed from above, a perfect match for the cultural wasteland that had been sterilized in the post-war period, just as it had been “aryanized” by fascism.

The wave of revolt that became known as *Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation* (PM Pamphlet) the “New Left” reached the FRG at about the same time as it reached the other imperialist countries, in the 1960s. Gathered around Hans-Jürgen Krahl and the East German *Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red*

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Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) refugees Rudi Dutschke and Bernd Rabehl, in West Berlin some students began questioning not only the economic system, but the very nature of society itself. The structure of the family, the factory, and the school system were all challenged Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) as these young rebels mixed the style of the hippie counter-culture with ideas drawn from the Frankfurt School's brand of Marxism. (Image A)

## **Daring To Struggle Failing To Win Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) The Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation (PM Pamphlet) Red Army Faction S 1977 Campaign Of Desperation PM Pamphlet**

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