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Mr. Richard H. Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
535 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Nolte:

Two weeks ago Newsweek asked me to contribute an extensive file on German students to a planned cover story on students abroad for the magazine's foreign edition. As is the wont of a newsmagazine, only one quotation from my file was included in the final article. But with the permission of Newsweek, and since the information I gathered is directly relevant to my study for the Institute, I offer it here as corollary material to my previous newsletters on the same subject.

In the winter semester 1968-69 when student government officers of West Berlin's Free University were threatened with expulsion for their political activity, leftist students called a strike that virtually halted instruction at three of the university's six faculties. "We have shown that we are able to terminate instruction for a short period, and make the university nonfunctional as an educational center for integrated intelligence," crowed a pamphlet from the student leaders at the beginning of the summer semester. Yet a few months later, in the last days of that same semester, the Berlin Senate passed a new university law abolishing a centralized government for the student body. And leftist students emitted barely a peep of protest.

This abrupt about-face does not mean that the student revolt in Berlin or in West Germany has collapsed, but it is indicative of a shift of emphasis by student activists from inside to outside the university, and of a splintering among Germany's new left.

"The students are not fighting any longer for a goal of university reform, they're fighting for the whole society," said Walter Satzinger, 25, a moderate leftist student and political science

major at the University of Munich. "We've realized you can't change the university alone and make it into a fortress, as Rudi Dutschke proposed. The ties to the workers are more important than the university now...it amounts to a shifting of relevance."

What's relevant now are the "basis groups" and "factory groups" that leftist students in Berlin and other German cities have formed "to transform the radical-democratic student revolt into a socialist mass movement." Lawyers, teachers, journalists, kindergarten teachers, physicians and technicians have joined together into cadre professional cells to analyze the capitalist inequities within their professions and to attempt to influence a move toward socialism.

A group of "critical architects" in West Berlin, for example, roused a public outcry over the social problems created by mass welfare housing projects such as the Maerkisches Viertel, where some 15,000 Berliners moved into a housing project built at such jackhammer pace that schools, bus services, kindergartens, even streets were still lacking months after the families arrived. Another group of doctors, nurses and sociologists joined forces to create the "Red Help," a clinical health service for workers and students who are not adequately insured. Part of the Red Help program is the "Blue Cross" rescue service, whose cars painted with a blue cross and with a leftist doctor and nurse inside show up at all protest demonstrations where violence may erupt between students and the police.

In the factory groups, students meet with young workers and apprentices to discuss their daily problems, trying to use the minor conflicts that arise on an assembly line or in the union meetings to re-awaken a class consciousness among the working class.

While these long-range organization efforts at establishing solidarity with the workers and the middle class are beginning to show results (witness the wildcat strikes in the Ruhr and Bavaria in early September just prior to the parliamentary elections), the student organization on the university level has gone to pot.

In this, the German student movement mirrors the general state of disarray among leftist student organizations in Europe. After the "May Revolution" of 1968, the once tightly-knit French UNEF split into warring factions of Maoists, Trotskyites, dogmatics

and others--and made a shambles of any post-May politics. Only since UNEF threw out the squabbling groups last year and decided to form a new organization has a concerted effort been discernible again among French students. In Italy, the same problems of in-fighting among the left have hampered any political progress.

The splintering of Germany's student movement began in late 1968 when the anti-authoritarian forces in the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund took over from old leaders like Karl Dietrich Wolff. But until this spring, the German left remained centrally organized at least under the Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften, the National League of German Students. Then the VDS, still backed by four-fifths of the university student governments, declared itself a militant socialist organization, thus scandalizing the Bonn government (they stopped federal funds for the student union), and at its second meeting in May elected a collective directorate of four SDS members. Now the four SDS directors propose dissolving the VDS entirely and returning the student work "to the basis," or back to the individual universities. The Freiburg and Aachen student governments (who oppose the SDS leadership of VDS) charge that \$56,000 is missing from the VDS coffers--and they suspect the money has been turned over to SDS.

Curiously, the student movement is having difficulty living with success. German students first went on the streets nationwide in 1965 to plead for badly-needed university reforms, and in those days the talk was purely of overcrowded university classrooms and of the lack of personal contact between professor and student--the usual dilemmas of the megaversity. The grievances were voiced first in Berlin because students at the Free University had seen better days--they knew what democratic cooperation between professor and student could mean, while the students in West Germany had always knuckled under to the 19th century authoritarian system in which the professor ruled with an iron hand.

"Students and professors were quite close in Berlin from the early fifties until 1958," said Wolfgang Wagner, 25, a political science student at the Free University. "But as the university expanded, they needed more profs... and in order to get them the university administration had to promise them the same privileges they had in West Germany. The Free University gradually changed to a professor-dominated university just like all the others."

Talk of university reform started at SDS in the early sixties, was echoed by the VDS, yet the politicians blindly took no note of the worsening conditions. The leftist student analysis placed the blame for lack of reforms on the authoritarian system, on professors who had to retain power not by force of merit but by repressing the students, and the mass of students gradually came to sympathize with their arguments. "The goals and organization of the leftists were not important at first," said Munich student Satzinger, "but the analysis of why the reforms were denied. Then the Marxist argumentation developed itself, and the reaction of the authorities confirmed the arguments. In those days we wanted to change the university--the goals were system-immanent. Now the goal is not a better education for technocrats, but emancipation for society."

Probably because German society seems so affluent and democratic--few slums, no Vietnam war, no race problems--the German student movement has developed more along theoretical lines than in France, Italy or the United States. Society's problems in the U. S. are obvious, and in France and Italy the lot of the worker can still be vastly improved. But poverty and unemployment are limited to small pockets of society here, and when the leftist students searched for issues beyond the university, they struck first on Vietnam.

"We could have exhibits of any kind in Berlin," recalled Wagner, "but an exhibit on the American war policy in Vietnam was not permitted. The injustices of a capitalist system that calls itself the leader of the free world were obvious in Vietnam, and we could see that the police and authorities here were supporting their partner, the United States. That made an abstract question very real." After the Berlin demonstration during the Shah of Iran's visit in June 1967, in which a policeman's bullet killed a student, students throughout West Germany consciously made the connection between "the authorities here and the repression in other lands."

Sociologist Juergen Habermas of Goethe University in Frankfurt explained that German society is "relatively conflict-free." Therefore, the students here have no reservoir for contact with the broader public, with civil rights-minded liberals, with anti-poverty advocates. "The solidarity--or opportunity for solidarity--with students outside the university doesn't exist."

Like other European students, however, and unlike Americans, the German students draw on a continual Marxist tradition. In Germany the concentration is on a Marxist analysis of the economy; in France the Marxist students are more structural, as Wagner pointed out--"because they can use the experiences of a strong Communist party." German students and professors characterize the American movement as "more humanist," and for obvious reasons. Explained Wagner, "the propaganda against communism has not been so basic here as in the U. S., where communism is the devil."

Indeed, a polling institute discovered in the summer of 1968 that well over a third of the German student population termed "humanistic communism" the best way of life, and a quarter of the students held to this opinion even after the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia.

The German student movement is generally more intellectual than the American. "When a German student quotes Marcuse or Habermas or Debray or Adorno, he's read those books," said one observer. "With the American students, I always have the feeling they're cribbing from the latest New York Review of Books."

But German students are older than American collegians, usually beginning their higher education at 19 and finishing at 24 to 30, depending on how many degrees they may decide to assemble. The leftist student leaders are often 25 to 28.

A general swing of the whole student population to the left also characterizes the German movement. "The traditional right student groups," noted Bjoern Paetzoldt, 25, former student government president at the University of Hamburg and VDS vice-president in charge of international contacts, "such as the RCDS (Ring Christlich-Demokratischer Studenten), now stands far to the left of its parent organization, the CDU, and demands today the same social reforms that the leftist students said were necessary four years ago."

The common characteristic of all European students these days, continued Paetzoldt, is a socialist philosophy. "In Luxembourg there are leftist students who are oriented on much the same politics as the German students, or in Italy, England, France and Sweden and so forth. The normal student, if you want to call him that, no longer exists. The leftist student has become the average

student."

In terms of violence, the Germans have shown far greater control than their colleagues in other European countries and the United States. The death toll stands at one martyr, Benno Ohnesorg, killed in Berlin in 1967, plus two innocent bystanders who died in the Easter riots following the spring 1968 attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke. Professor Habermas, who taught for a semester at the New School of Social Research in New York and has lectured at Berkeley and other American colleges, admitted he was "shocked" at the violence absorbed within the protest movements in the United States. "The excitement over a broken window here is far greater than in America--the culture has far narrower limits for violence on the streets and on the school campus."

Professor Erwin Scheuch, a sociologist at the University of Cologne, charged however that the German students even out the balance in psycho-terror, "the individual vilification of professors and other enemies." He cited a leftist psycho-terror campaign against Professor Habermas in Frankfurt as an example--reputedly Habermas' seminar students had mocked his lisping because of his hare-lip. But when I checked the story with Habermas, he laughed and said it simply wasn't true. "Even my students didn't think of that."

Scheuch's other example, however, may indeed have shocked Professor Theodor Adorno, another Marxist sociologist/philosopher and like Habermas one of the intellectual fathers of the German student movement. The late Adorno, who died earlier this year and with whom I could not check the allegation, was said to have an intense aversion to persons standing close to him, and to crudities. So he may well have suffered psychological terror when last year a group of radical-left girl students took their blouses off, clustered around him and, the story goes, practically smothered the little man with their bare breasts.

Even though the leftist movement seems to be going through "a period of desolation," as Paetzold describes it, their socialist message is spreading to the high schools, and the juvenile interest in what had been until recently a purely university movement is another characteristic differentiating the German student revolt from other European movements.

Curiously, drugs have played virtually no role in the German

protest wave--a Heidelberg activist whom I met at a VDS meeting last spring explained it thusly: "I smoked hash for about a year, but then gave it up because it took too much time. There's too much political work to be done here, and we don't have time for drugs."

But the smoking of hashish and marijuana is on the increase in Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich. Professor Habermas foresees an Entpolitisierung, a drop in the politicalization of students, if the fascination with drugs should continue to grow.

The swing of student sympathies to the left has also brought with it a definite change in the average student's career orientation. Many young Germans now consider first whether they can affect society in a job they take after graduation, not whether the job offer includes a high salary and chance of quick assimilation into the capitalist, consumer society. A leftist student in Berlin, for example, told me that he plans to place a limit on his career advancement, because it would be too easy to succumb to the enticements of a consumer society if he reached a higher salary level. "At \$500 a month, the salary for a high school teacher, I can live reasonably comfortably and raise a family. I don't want to get into the rat-race of the affluent society."

Leftist students are also forming communes to provide psychological and financial insulation from the consumer society, and to strengthen their individual political impact. If one member of the commune should be dismissed from his job because of his political activity, the others can support him until he lands another.

German apprentices and young workers, however, still harbor a strong economic motivation, even though, as shoe salesman Hans-Peter Hermann, 22, said, "I think the original idea of communism would be the ideal society...but we'll never realize that."

Working youth, continued Hermann, "don't have the great ideals that students have. They have to keep their feet on the ground, they're more practical. I suppose we think more about economic goals because we must. We're standing on our own two feet and we don't have any money from the state or from our parents."

But Hermann said he was jubilant at the SPD election victory, and he hopes that the Social Democrats will pay more attention to the lot of the worker. He would like to see tax reforms put through

that would put the burden on the higher income brackets, and offer higher deductions for children. "I have a wife and we're expecting a baby, but as far as taxes are concerned, I would be just as well off being a bachelor."

Despite the high ideals of the student movement, Hermann said, almost apologetically, that "I still look at them as hippies and beatniks, with a Beatle hairstyle and dirty clothes and maybe a child on one arm. They seem to float around in higher regions. We have to deal with the practical things in life."

Although few German activists would agree with the hippie label, the leftists are aware of their image among the working class. They're also aware that it would be ridiculous to expect the workers--at this stage--to reject economic motivations. "Nobody talks about money at the university; everybody knows they will get a job of some kind," said Wagner. "But the workers have good reason to talk about it...the average laborer's monthly income is \$230, and a college graduate will earn at least \$250 to \$275 when he begins."

They have not yet bridged the gap in understanding between the young workers and the rest of the population, but the German student movement can still tick off considerable successes. A qualified success is the fact that some ten years after the first proposals were made, German state legislatures are putting through university reform laws that dissolve the old-style faculties and usually provide for a one-third student parity on university governing boards.

The students have also accomplished "a change in the political climate," as Professor Habermas put it, and "a challenge for themes that would never have been mentioned without the student protests." Habermas cited as examples:

- *a new body of laws establishing the limits for press concentration (a result of the leftist campaign against the Axel Springer conservative newspaper empire).
- *a weakened version of the emergency laws--the students hoped to prevent it altogether, but at least succeeded in pulling most of its teeth.

*a new criminal law code, with more liberal passages relating to disturbing the peace and public property.

* "great impulses in the churches and the publishing houses," such as participation in editorial and marketing decisions for the editors, in the churches even a "political evening mass" without a priest where the discussion is about the Third World.

*that the SPD, successfully, pursued "a conflict instead of an appeasement election campaign."

Sociologist Scheuch, a liberal of the old school, who generally disapproves of the student movement, admitted however that "the students have acted like the children in Andersen's fairy tale and said that the emperor has no new clothes. They've brought about a spring cleaning in some institutions, they're destroyed the ritualistic pretensions of society." But Scheuch fears that society can't afford to be that baldly honest. "When the homely pretensions are destroyed, there's nothing more frightening than a society based on meritocracy. That's what the students are pushing for, but they won't like it when it comes."

Scheuch accuses the leftist students of "reducing liberal tenets to the absurd," of starting with Spock and ending with anti-authoritarian kindergartens in which children are reared entirely according to the pleasure principle; of taking participatory democracy to the point that rejects expertise, where "life is a continuous process of ad hoc decision making."

As to what the future holds, Scheuch is even more pessimistic. "We'll have another crisis in Germany from 1972 to 1975," he predicted, "when 300,000 students can be handled by the universities and 500,000 want to study." The overcrowding at the universities will shift the emphasis more strongly to the high schools, "and if the whole thing turns into a juvenile rebellion, coupled with drugs, obscenity and generation hatred, I see a danger of strong counter-reaction."

Whether or not this cultural crisis can be prevented depends, according to Scheuch, upon the present middle generation, those above 30 and below 50 who still can exert control on the cultural institutions. "There's already subtle subversion in all the cultural areas--the kids are more engineered by alienated adults like

Mailer (Norman) than by themselves. A student movement can test, can bring things into movement, but it can never sustain anything."

Scheuch disapproves of a cult developing which "will redefine youth as a master race...to be young is to be right." He doesn't buy that philosophy, he said, "because I find them boring, and they aren't as happy as I am."

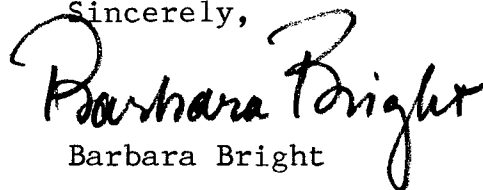
Less flamboyant but more reasonable is the prediction given by Professor Habermas, who notes that "in America the reaction brought the Republicans in, and here, despite the reaction, we have a SPD/FDP coalition. That's why I'm not so pessimistic. We have a good chance to put through fundamental reforms--in education, justice and a more liberal foreign policy, all for the first time."

Once vilified by his students for having labeled the activists "left fascists," a term he later took back, Habermas said, "I was wrong about the reaction the students would gain from society to their methods of protest. For the time being, the changes are more positive than negative." Predicting that the anarchistic influences in SDS will lose power, Habermas said the anarchism will fade from politics into the sub-cultural scene of museums, theaters, films and books.

But the SDS and the new left are not about to fade away. "Without doubt, certain signs of disintegration can be seen in the organization form of the left at the moment," said Paetzoldt, "but that doesn't mean that the left will disappear. That means that after a phase of desolation, something like in France, the student left will and must find a new form of organization, so that it can do political work again."

As illustration for the article, four personal interviews follow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Bright". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first name "Barbara" being more prominent than the last name "Bright".

Barbara Bright

The sunny fall days at her parents' modest home in Bad Godesberg were Ulrike Eschenhagen's last days of leisure before classes began on October 15 at the University of Giessen where she studies nutritional science. She'd already made one trip to the university town, rented a room ("it's cheap, but I have to heat with coal") and painted her few odds and ends of furniture in bright pop colors. For Ulrike, 19, going to the university means her first independent step into the world and an emancipation from strict parental rules at home.

"I feel that German students generally protest more for reforms within society than just within the university," said Ulrike, sweeping her long and thick Brunette hair back from her shoulder. "We all have problems with our families--it's a generation gap, sometimes because of politics, sometimes because the student wants to be independent. It's partly different here because our parents experienced the war, and the older generation tells us we can't judge them because we didn't experience it. That makes an incongruous situation--parents and children have to live together, but there's no general basis for consideration."

Ulrike's older brother, Wieland, lives in a Berlin commune and studies political science at the Free University. He's a member of the new left, but Ulrike disagrees with him on how the authoritarian system should be replaced in society and in the university.

"Capitalism must be curbed--it isn't right that a manufacturer can buy out a patent for ~~run~~-free hosiery and lock it in his safe, just so he can sell more hosiery. And social justice must be increased--old-age pensions for housewives and cleaning women, for example. The abolition of authorities is the basis for reform--some say only the scientific authorities should remain, but none who influence people beyond the facts. But I think you have to seek a synthesis between personality and scientific knowledge--in teaching, for example, 'how' is decisive for most, not 'what.'"

Although the radical left disapproves of charismatic leaders, Ulrike feels the German public would understand the student movement better "if there were personalities who could influence the population. There's no political line in the extra-parliamentary opposition that a normal citizen can understand. I think it would have been different if Rudi Dutschke had been around longer...he was a personality, but he had scientific knowledge too."

Cherub-faced, curly-haired Bjoern Paetzoldt retired from organized student politics this spring after serving one year as the international vice-president for the Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften, and another year as president of the student government at the University of Hamburg. He now shares a small apartment with his fiancée, who works for an American firm in Hamburg, and is writing his thesis on "Education for Foreigners in the Federal Republic--Development Aid or Imperialism."

Student complaints against the universities in West Germany go beyond the structural grievances of overcrowded classrooms and bad professor-student ratios, says Paetzoldt. The leftist students also want curriculum changes--"Marxism is only taught at two universities in the Federal Republic--in Frankfurt and Marburg; otherwise it doesn't exist." German students, therefore, have developed their own theories of Marxism, and the leftist movement is divided into activists and theoreticians.

Paetzoldt describes the European student movement as "based on socialism," in contrast to the American, "where even the American SDS is first of all a purely non-conformist movement that sprang from the civil rights movement." German students, however, realized about four years ago "that it was not solely important to build a privileged group within the society, represented by the students, where only some six percent of laborers' children attend the university. The university can be simply a basis, a fundament of the free and democratic thought carried over to other areas of society. The only thing the university can accomplish in our opinion is that it gives laborers or white-collar workers a picture of what they could do in their areas. When we want to democratize the university, then not for the sake of the university but for the democratization of the society."

Paetzoldt's dream of a perfect society means one in which "the principle is equality, and freedom and equality mean that there are no dependents, even in the economic process, but self-determination for all workers." He would call this a democratic socialist society, but he admits that it does not exist today, neither in Sweden ("where there is still a capitalist basic structure") nor in the socialist nations of East Europe. "They have shown that bureaucratic tendencies can creep in under the flag of socialism and bring the apparatus to a halt. It has become so repressive for citizens there that anyone who hears of this socialist society says 'we don't want that.' That's why it is so hard to speak of a socialist society--we don't want that either, because we simply don't consider the political system over there socialist."



Holger Tantz and Walter Satzinger

Two years ago they were working with trade unions in South Vietnam as members of West Germany's Peace Corps, setting up youth social centers in cities and the countryside. Now Holger Tantz, 25, a law graduate studying for his second degree in geography at Munich's Technical College, and Walter Satzinger, 25, a political science student who also works as an assistant at the University of Munich, have returned to join the student movement.

"We weren't here for some of the major campaigns," says Walter. "I started at the University in 1963, when we still had a consciousness of being privileged to study. That was the atmosphere even when I left in 1966, when Dutschke was hardly known and most people were scared to ask professors a question because they were in awe of them. But when I came back Dutschke had been shot and was in Italy, and the students who came to the Uni were no longer timid...they had far more self-confidence." "The difficulties with fear of authority are gone for students," agrees his friend Holger, "but I don't think the students know any more about their goals now than they did when we started."

Both Holger and Walter feel "a little schizophrenic" because they have one foot in the establishment and one foot in the leftist student movement. "As a junior barrister," said Holger, "I try not to make my career kaputt. But as a leftist I also say the privileges of the jurists must be abolished. You have to make compromises." Walter agrees: "We're in the middle. I have to balance between being a student and an assistant. Because I have a better relationship with the professor I try to influence him, but in the eyes of the students I belong to the system."

Holger joined the SPD early this year, but he says he would have dropped his membership if the party had joined again in coalition with the CDU/CSU. "I'm not a member with my heart, but with my reason." He believes the leftist students must continue to fight within the system as well as outside. "Although I get depressed every day," Holger says he's seen some results as well: "During the campaign against the emergency laws we stayed up night and day for 14 days, teach-ins and everything possible, but the impact was absolutely nil. But on one night at an SPD district meeting, the leftists persuaded four SPD parliamentary deputies to vote their conscience in the Bundestag. The result was three votes against, and one abstention. We couldn't have gotten that with just the street action alone."

Five people live in the spacious, high-ceilinged old Berlin apartment--political science student Wolfgang Wagner, 25; his fiancée Chris, who is studying German literature and history and plans to teach; a dental assistant; her husband, who already has a degree in theater and now studies economics; and their four-month-old son. The commune, where each contributes what he earns to a common kitty and takes out what he needs, is their small personal attempt to create a socialist island within the capitalist world.

"If you live in a commune the whole relationship of money changes," says Wolf, who plans to become a high school teacher and is now working on his Doktorand, a German degree "between a master's and a Ph.D. that is something just to show off with." "At first, if someone drinks more beer, you think that he's using up too much of your money, but that gradually becomes irrelevant. Money is just to live, it is not so much a reality in itself. In normal society, having money is a fetish."

Wolf says the society he's looking for "is one in which people stop being disciplined and obedient, in which they try to find a basis of solidarity among people of similar circumstances. We want people to take things into their own hands and realize their own interests."

The drawbacks to a Utopia within our society stem from the capitalist system, says Wagner, for even in social democratic Sweden the state intervenes "only to alleviate the ills after they have been produced...I think it's better not to produce the suffering." As an example of inequities produced by capitalism he cites "the deadly organization of traffic, which is due to over-production of cars. Three-fourths of them stand idle daily, but if we reduce the auto production, the economy would be hit hard." More cars, however, require bigger and better roads, which requires demolishing old buildings that stand in the way. "To demolish the buildings you have to move the people, and if five hundred people are moved, this means premature death for 60 people. They die earlier because they are ripped out of the social fabric of the old neighborhood. All this incalculable suffering because of cars."

The student idea now "is to mobilize people not as a political party that is representing them, but to go there and ask them to do something about their situation themselves," says Wolf. The student movement has already shown that "authorities do listen if you take things into your own hands."