

'The Revolution is My Boyfriend!': Fetishising the 'Red Army Faction' in Recent German Film

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Throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century the theme of left-wing German terrorism and specifically the terrorist group the RAF (Red Army Faction) regularly appeared on the front page of Germany's national newspapers. Although the group disbanded in 1998, the RAF and the events of the 'German Autumn' in 1977 still held the power to captivate Germany.¹ In 2007, the thirtieth anniversary year of the 'German Autumn', the RAF seemed to be constantly in the headlines. Former RAF member Brigitte Mohnhaupt was released from prison after twenty-five years of imprisonment; ex-terrorist Christian Klar plead for a pardon to President Johannes Rau, and an ongoing investigation took place into the shooting of Generalbundesanwalt Siegfried Buback on 7 April 1977, all of which created a great

Title from *The Raspberry Reich*, dir. by Bruce LaBruce (Peccadillo Pictures, 2004).

1. The 'German Autumn' or Deutsche Herbst refers to a period in 1977 when the terror campaigns of the RAF were most active. The period includes the kidnapping and murder of Hanns Martin Schleyer as well as the hijacking of a Lufthansa aircraft by RAF sympathisers the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Although the RAF disbanded in 1998 they had been inactive for many years before this.

amount of interest in German newspapers and magazines.² It seemed that the RAF had returned to the forefront of German memory culture.

The RAF, also referred to as the ‘Baader-Meinhof’ gang during its earlier years, was a terrorist group operating in West Germany during the 1970s and 1980s. The group was motivated by revolutionary ideals; they were staunchly left-wing, anti-imperialist and anti-fascist and criticised the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) for its relationship with America and its perceived links to National Socialism. The RAF robbed banks, attacked military installations and department stores, and later kidnapped and murdered prominent business and political figures. Members of the group, such as Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin became household names during this period. The influence of the RAF on post-war German history was substantial. It has been claimed that no other period of German history (with the exception of the Third Reich and the Holocaust) has been discussed as avidly and intensively as the 1968 student movement and the ensuing terrorism of the RAF.³ Indeed the RAF debate has been characterised as an ‘Historians’ Debate Reloaded’, an allusion to the eternally debated legacy of National Socialism.⁴ The constant resurgence of interest in the ex-terrorists and the legacy of their terrorism suggests that this part of history has been repressed and has not been ‘dealt with’ sufficiently, something reinforced by Michael Sontheimer in the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*:

Zeigt sich nicht eher, dass der “Deutsche Herbst” nicht verarbeitet ist, dass er Traumata hinterlassen hat, dass es keinen Konsens darüber gibt, warum es im Wohlstands-Westdeutschland überhaupt dazu kommen konnte, dass junge

2. Ier/AP/dpa, ‘RAF-Opfer rufen Köhler zu Gnaden-Verweigerung auf’, *Spiegel Online*, 22 April 2007: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,478736,00.html>, [accessed 18 April 2011].

See also: anr/cvo/kaz/ddp/AP, ‘Alle Parteien fordern Klarheit über Buback-Mord’, *Spiegel Online*, 22 April 2007: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,478690,00.html> [accessed 18 April 2011].

3. Reinhard Mohr, ‘Schmierentheater um die RAF’, *Spiegel Online*, 30 March 2007: <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,474799,00.html> [accessed 18 April 2011].

4. Mohr. The ‘Historians’ Debate’ was the name given to a discussion between various intellectual and political figures in the late 1980s on how the National Socialist past should be remembered in West Germany.

Menschen aus der Mitte der Gesellschaft zu Terroristen werden konnten? Auch darüber, ob Staat und Gesellschaft auf den Terrorismus richtig reagiert haben.⁵

[Does it not suggest, rather, that the “German Autumn” has not been worked through, that it has left trauma in its wake, that there is no consensus of opinion as to how, in well-to-do West Germany, it could happen that people from the midst of society could become terrorists? Also as to whether the state and society reacted correctly to terrorism.]

This article intends to explore how German terrorism and the legacy of the RAF are remembered in contemporary Germany and how this has changed in the decades since the ‘German Autumn’. It will do this by analysing and comparing three films made in the first decade of the twenty-first century: *Baader* (2002), *The Raspberry Reich* (2004) and *The Baader-Meinhof Complex* (2008). The article intends to explicitly focus on the trend towards the ‘fetishisation’ of the RAF: how the group’s revolutionary politics have been ignored in favour of the images and motifs of revolution and how this anti-consumerist group has been transformed into material consumer goods. The article will ask how these films reflect and comment on this development and whether this constitutes a revolution in depictions of the RAF since the group’s disbandment.

The RAF has been a subject for cinema almost since the inception of the group itself. In the aftermath of the ‘German Autumn’ of 1977, left-wing terrorism forced its way onto the agenda of the filmmakers of the very political New German Cinema.⁶ There were numerous films made during this period which dealt with the issues surrounding left-wing terrorism: for example Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *Die dritte Generation* (1978) [*The Third Generation*], Margarethe von Trotta’s *Das zweite Erwachen der Christa Klages* (1978) [*The Second Awakening of Christa Klages*] and *Die bleierne Zeit* (1981) [*The German Sisters*] as well as the

5. Michael Sontheimer, ‘Christian Klar ist eine tragische Figur’, *Spiegel Online*, 13 March 2007: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,471391,00.html> [accessed 18 April 2011].

6. The designation ‘New German Cinema’ has come to represent a group of film directors born around the time of the Second World War and whose films attempted to engage with contemporary West German reality, which often meant confronting the recent Nazi past.

collaborative effort *Deutschland im Herbst* (1978) [*Germany in Autumn*], from directors such as Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge and Volker Schlöndorff.⁷ These films had clear political aims and represented a serious attempt to come to terms with the past. These filmmakers wanted to explore the political situation in West Germany at that time, to find and understand the roots of this terrorism and how the continuation of violence could be averted.

History as Myth: *Baader* (2002)

Towards the end of the 1990s, the RAF reappeared on the agenda of German filmmakers, yet their depictions of the terrorist group were subtly different to the efforts of the New German Cinema. This renewed interest has been assigned to various factors, not least due to the renewed interest in the history of the RAF provoked by their official disbandment in 1998. Some commentators have also suggested that a move towards the ‘normalisation’ of German history (in particular of the National Socialist period) led to attempts to deal with this part of history too.⁸ Similarly, the 20th anniversary of the ‘German Autumn’ in 1997 heralded a new series of talks, events and films on the RAF. This revival in memory and representations of the RAF was distinguished from previous debates by the temporal distance from the events of the ‘German Autumn’: the RAF was no longer an immediate threat, so could be treated differently. Instead of concentrating on real-life politics and ideology, films produced in this era explored the myths surrounding the terrorists. They focused principally on characters and events, not politics. Baader, Ensslin, Meinhof and the other gang members were no longer primarily portrayed as criminals but historical celebrities. While earlier films went to great lengths to avoid possible identification with terrorist characters, the historical distance from events

7. Author Unknown, ‘Keine Stille nach dem Schuss: Terrorismus in deutschen Film’, *filmportal.de*: <http://www.filmportal.de/df/7e/Artikel,,,,,,,,FC5331E6248E2C3EE03053D50B376058,,,,,,,,,,,,,html> [accessed 18 April 2011].

8. Christopher Homewood, ‘The Return of the “Undead” History: The West German Terrorist as Vampire and the Problem of “Normalizing” the Past in Margarethe von Trotta’s *Die bleierne Zeit* (1981) and Christian Petzold’s *Die innere Sicherheit* (2001)’, in *Beyond Normalization*, ed. by Paul Cooke and Stuart Taberner, (New York: Camden House, 2006), pp.121-135 (p.121).

allowed later films to ‘subordinate historical material in favour of a good story’ and tended to replace political debate with seductiveness and criminal glamour.⁹

Even during their terror campaigns the mythological qualities of the RAF were noted by some commentators. As early as 1972, the left-orientated writer Günter Grass feared Ulrike Meinhof would become the perfect subject of heroic movies and compared her and Baader to the outlaw lovers Bonnie and Clyde.¹⁰ It has also been claimed that the violence of the RAF was predominantly symbolic, that they only gained real significance through the reactions of others: the state, the student movement and the media, therefore suggesting the terrorists were dependent on the reaction of the public.¹¹ Baader was strongly aware of the power of image, even keeping his sunglasses on as he was arrested in a nationally televised siege in Frankfurt.¹² Film could be seen as a fitting way to capture these mythologised and self-mythologising terrorists. In Christopher Roth’s *Baader* (2002), the eponymous hero is a wildly stylised version of the terrorist Andreas Baader. He is presented as a wild west anti-hero, a desperado, for whom image is superior to revolutionary ideology. The film suggests that the gangster glamour of Baader’s petty criminal activities is as important as his political crimes against the state.¹³ He is depicted stealing a car, using it almost as an act of seduction to the young gang member Karin. The character Baader is obsessed with image: he and his gang wear sunglasses and smoke in court and he prefers stealing BMWs, predominantly because they are sexy.¹⁴ The film’s ending represents the culmination of the Baader myth: ignoring historical truth, Baader does not commit suicide in his cell in Stammheim prison, he instead dies in an heroic last stand. Surrounded by police, Baader nevertheless emerges all guns blazing, furnished with sunglasses and a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, and dies like a true desperado.

9. Palfreyman, p.39.

10. Julian Preece, ‘Between Identification and Documentation, ‘Autofiction’ and ‘Biopic’: The Lives of the RAF’, *German Life and Letters*, Vol 56, (no. 4, October 2003), pp.363-373 (p.367).

11. Preece, p.373.

12. Richard Huffman, ‘The Gun Speaks: The Baader-Meinhof Gang at the Dawn of Terror’: <http://www.baader-meinhof.com/gun/chapter/index.htm> [accessed 26 April 2007].

13. Palfreyman, p.34.

14. Baader, dir. by Christopher Roth (Universum Film, 2002). At the time it was often joked that BMW stood for ‘Baader-Meinhof Wagen’ (Baader-Meinhof Car).

Baader is portrayed as a living legend, an über-celebrity. He and Ensslin are given the fake names Hans and Grete while hiding out at Ulrike Meinhof's house, suggesting that they are fairy stories, myths. Baader's legendary status is reinforced at several points throughout the film: firstly, there is a 'Spartacus moment' in the courtroom when several people cry 'Ich bin der Baader!' ¹⁵ [I'm Baader!]. Similarly, Karin's response when she first meets the man confirms his celebrity status: 'Du bist der Baader stimmt's? [...] Wow!' ¹⁶ [You're Baader aren't you? [...] Wow!], she exclaims, as if she has just met her favourite pop star. The character of Baader is very aware of his anti-hero status and he is depicted exploiting this: he threatens a policeman at a checkpoint, growling 'Ich bin der Baader!' ¹⁷ [I'm Baader]. Using the definite article ('der') to refer to himself, Baader revels in his own celebrity. This continued interest in his own celebrity is depicted throughout the film. Baader is shown reading about himself in magazines, watching news reports on television and hearing about himself on the radio. He even quotes opinion polls on how popular the RAF is.

Much criticism of the film has argued that the romanticising of a group who were responsible for murder and other acts of terrorism could be seen as a dangerous trend. ¹⁸ The film manages to avoid this, however; while Baader is portrayed as a cool anti-hero, the use of certain cinematic devices draw attention to the film's artificiality; it 'demonstrates the allure of the myth but also exposes it as construct'. ¹⁹ Acknowledging that the events within the film are artificial and constructed helps to distance Baader the character from Baader the historical figure. It is therefore possible to identify with the former in filmic terms without necessarily validating the real-life actions of the latter. The collage of images depicting Baader and his gang amidst stock footage of the Vietnam war, amongst other things, with which the film begins, immediately suggest to the viewer that the film is a constructed piece of fiction. The use of slow-motion, changing formats (cuts to home video-style Super 8 film and back), time jumps and documentary collages all draw attention to the

15. Baader.

16. Baader.

17. Baader.

18. See Rachel Palfreyman, 'The Fourth Generation', pp. 11 - 42.

19. Ibid., p.37.

techniques of cinema, meaning the viewer cannot accept this as real-life or even documentary.²⁰ Similarly, the scene in which Baader watches the gangster movie *48 Hours to Acapulco* (1967) reminds the audience that they too are watching a fictional gangster film, not real life. Whereas films contemporary to the actions of the RAF made clear the ideological reasons for which the terrorists were fighting, *Baader* and other films of this era, such as Volker Schlöndorff's *The Legend of Rita* (2000) concentrate on the personalities carrying out these acts. The historical distance from these events allow the films of the twenty-first century to focus on the image, style and mythology of the Baader-Meinhof gang members without needing to immerse the audience in the revolutionary ideology of the RAF.

History as Porno: *The Raspberry Reich* (2004)

Since the release of *Baader* a trend has developed which takes the mythologisation of the terrorist as seen in Roth's film one step further. As 'the world's first celebrity terrorists' the Baader-Meinhof gang have gradually become 'the embodiment of radical chic'.²¹ Today, the terrorists of the RAF have become more relevant as style icons than revolutionaries: the RAF star is found on T-shirts and catwalks feature terrorism-inspired fashions, even underwear carrying the slogan 'Prada-Meinhof'.²² These terrorist symbols are reportedly seen by the youth of Berlin as 'witzig', 'poppig' and 'jugendkultig', [witty, trendy and youth-cultish].²³ Despite an evident danger in deliberately glamourising, commodifying and profiting from a group who were responsible for many deaths, Paul Cooke notes that the re-appropriation of the symbols and insignia of the RAF by '89-er pop culture:

20. Jan Distelmeyer, 'Christopher Roths Terroristen-Biografie scheitert an ihren Vorgaben' epd Film, Nr. 10 (2 October 2002):

<http://www.filmportal.de/df/c8/Artikel.....FCB8A28F9C0CD3F6E03053D50B372C88.....html> [accessed 18 April 2011].

21. Huffman. 'The Gun Speaks'.

22. Kate Conolly, 'Astrid Proll's journey to Terror Chic', *Observer*, 6 October 2002.

23. Reinhard Wengierek, 'Auf RAF komm raus: Claus Peymann will Christian Klar als Praktikanten', *Welt Online*, 23 March 2005: http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article559718/Auf_RAF_komm_raus_Claus_Peymann_will_Christian_Klar_als_Praktikanten.html [accessed 18 April 2011].

might be read as the ultimate rejection of this past, an ironic statement that the radicalism of this generation was a pointless gesture because the memory of the terrorist group now lives on as a manifestation of the very consumer culture it sought to undermine.²⁴

Although some people may see this renewed interest into the material signs of the RAF as a ‘harmless expression of a bygone era’, there are some commentators who find it genuinely troubling. Former German President Johannes Rau denounced this trend: ‘the symbols of murder have surfaced in stylish ad campaigns, as if the terrorists were heroes of pop culture’,²⁵ he claimed. There was also certain opposition to the trend from the other side of the debate, represented by former terrorist Inge Viett who lamented that the concepts and symbols formerly belonging to the RAF had been re-appropriated by those in power and that they had been imbued with associations from the spheres of consumer goods and war.²⁶

Similarly, former RAF member Astrid Proll dismissed the current trend for terrorist icons and memorabilia, describing those who sell it as: ‘Arseholes, just into marketing and making money.’²⁷ In a similar vein of irony Proll released a book of photographs of the RAF in 2000, claiming ‘I earn my money from the RAF, so why not keep it up?’²⁸ This obsession with the symbols of these revolutionary groups has been described as a fetish, notably by Bernd Ulrich in his *Die Zeit* article ‘Die RAF als Porno’ [The RAF as porno] from April 2007,²⁹ in which he criticised the renewed interest in the RAF and the obsession with this period of history. Ulrich defined pornography as: ‘die grille öffentliche Darstellung intime Vorgänge ohne Kontext und ohne Erkenntnis’ [the public depiction of intimate acts without context and without awareness], before claiming that the historical actions of the RAF have been turned into a form of pornography: ‘Am Anfang war die Knarre, am Ende der Porno,

24. Paul Cooke, *From Colonization to Nostalgia: Representing East Germany Since Unification*, (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p.120.

25. Stephen Graham, ‘Pop culture revival of terrorists stirs worry’, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 18 November 2002.

26. Inge Viett, ‘Lust auf Freiheit: Unsere Geschichte als Klassenkampf von unten verteidigen’, *Junge Welt*, 24 February 2007.

27. Conolly, ‘Astrid Proll’s journey to Terror Chic’.

28. Ibid.

29. Bernd Ulrich, ‘Die RAF als Porno’, *Die Zeit*, 26 April 2007.

was beide verbindet, ist die Gier nach Aufmerksamkeit' [In the beginning was the gun, at the end the porno, what links them both is the lust for attention].³⁰

Canadian filmmaker Bruce LaBruce takes the description of the RAF as pornography to its logical conclusion in *The Raspberry Reich* (2004). Described as 'deutscher Terrorismus in einer Art von Underground Pulp Fiction als feuchter Traum' [German terrorism in a kind of underground Pulp Fiction as wet dream] and characterised by its director as a 'genre exercise in porn', *The Raspberry Reich* is a tongue-in-cheek critique of terrorist chic.³¹ It deals with a group claiming to be the sixth generation of the RAF, whose leader Gudrun believes: 'There is no revolution without sexual revolution. There is no sexual revolution without homosexual revolution' and forces her male comrades to 'join the homosexual intifada.'³²

Through linking sex with the ideology and actions of revolution LaBruce makes literal this previously suggested fetishisation of terrorism. In one of the first scenes of the film, gang member 'Che' is seen fellating a revolver, then masturbating while holding a shotgun in a bedroom which is dominated by images of Che Guevara. In a later scene, two of the gang members have sex wearing balaclavas then, mixing the political with the sexual, Gudrun reads a tirade against the American CIA over images of anal sex. When the group prepare to make a hostage video it is explicitly referred to as making pornography, once more equating the actions of terrorism with porn. Perhaps the greatest critique of this fetishisation is a scene set at a surreal 'terrorist night' in a Berlin gay bar, which functions as an epilogue to the film. Here the fashion for terrorism is explicitly revealed as a fad. A man wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with the legend 'I ♥ Ernst Roehm' is informed by a drag queen: 'Nazi is

30. Ibid.

31. Georg Seeßlen, 'The Raspberry Reich: Die RAF als Underground-Pulp-Fiction in einem Film von Bruce LaBruce', *epd Film*, Nr 4, 2 April 2004, found at: <http://www.filmportal.de/df/e3/Artikel,,,,,,,,,FCB8F28C9DD41D37E03053D50B3732C6,,,,,,,,,,,,,html> [accessed 18 April 2011]. See also: Jop van Benekoom, 'Bruce LaBruce from Toronto interviewed in Berlin about Punks, Fans, Faggots, Terrorists, Skin-heads and German Ancestors', *Butt Magazine*: <http://buttmagazine.com/?p=161> [accessed 18 April 2011]. See also: JT Leroy, 'Sex and the Revolutionary', *Filmmaker Magazine*, 13 December 2002.

32. *The Raspberry Reich*.

so five minutes ago', suggesting that this period of German history is fashionable only temporarily and soon something else will take its place.³³

Throughout the film it is clear that ideology is secondary to image for the 'sixth generation' terrorists. Gudrun constantly delivers supposedly revolutionary slogans such as: 'corporate hip-hop is counter-revolutionary'; 'Madonna is counter-revolutionary' and 'cornflakes are counter-revolutionary.'³⁴ Their omnipresence and bizarre nature suggest that there is no real knowledge or even desire for revolution behind them; this is a definite example of style over substance. The arbitrary nature of these slogans is reinforced by their appearance on screen as text. They scroll across the foreground, covering the height and width of the screen in giant, neon block capitals. Often shown over sexual scenes and interspersed with words like 'fuck', these slogans quickly lose any meaning. Similarly, Gudrun's revolutionary ideals are occasionally shown to be of secondary importance. She refuses to 'put her Marxism where her mouth is' when instructing her comrades to go shoplifting in a small family-owned store rather than a chain supermarket, because the security there is less tight: 'We don't have time right now to argue over petty ideological distinctions', she explains.³⁵ The film's style reinforces the importance of image over ideology. Scene changes are identified by non-diegetic gunshots and sirens. Similarly, strobing inter-titles appear intermittently against a bright red background. This is a bells and whistles approach to terrorism, where image is everything and where MTV is the style guide. *The Raspberry Reich* depicts and satirises the trend of adopting hollow images of left-wing terrorism, without any of its ideology, comparing this trend explicitly to pornography.

History as Action Movie: *The Baader-Meinhof Complex* (2008)

Films dealing with the RAF, German terrorism and the student movement have remained popular throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century and beyond. 2007 saw the release of Hans Weingartner's *Die Fetten sind vorbei* [*The Edukators*], which dealt with the death of 1968-inspired radicalism, as well as the TV

33. *The Raspberry Reich*. Ernst Röhm was the commander of the Sturmabteilung (SA) before being killed on the 'Night of the Long Knives' in 1934. It is also well-known that he was homosexual.

34. *The Raspberry Reich*.

35. *The Raspberry Reich*.

Movie *Mogadischu*, a thriller on the hijacking of the 'Landshut' aircraft in 1977. Most recently, Andres Veiel has directed a film entitled *Wer wenn nicht wir*, [*If Not Us, Who?*] released in March 2011, on the earlier life on Gudrun Ensslin. Perhaps the best-known film on the RAF of recent years is 2008's *The Baader Meinhof Complex*, directed by Uli Edel. Released in a media storm of publicity, the film depicts the familiar story of the eponymous terrorists, yet in a markedly different style to films such as *Baader*. Importantly, the film was based on the non-fiction book of the same name, written by Stefan Aust, (who had unprecedented access to the group), and is, for some, the defining work on the Baader-Meinhof gang. This is reflected in the film, which lacks a standard narrative structure and where the action unfurls as a series of vignettes. In comparison to the stylised version of events in *Baader*, Edel's film aims to reconstruct the period as authentically as possible. Sets, locations, clothes and hairstyles were carefully recreated and even the film's cars were borrowed from museums.³⁶ The film depicts the important events in the history of the terrorist group and it does this graphically and definitively, even when there is historically some confusion over the course of events. The shooting of student Benno Ohnesorg, the kidnapping of industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer, and the murder of banker Jürgen Ponto – pivotal moments in the history of the RAF with which viewers would probably be familiar through black and white news reports or still photographs – were depicted graphically in full colour and high quality. The importance of realism and the educational aspects of the film were also highlighted by the filmmakers, who produced an educational pack for use in schools, suggesting the film was intended to be taken seriously as an historical document, unlike the knowing mythologisation of Baader.

The terrorists of *The Baader Meinhof Complex* are nevertheless presented as glamorous, attractive and sexy and their crimes are portrayed as a Hollywood action movie. It was produced by Bernd Eichinger, who was responsible for many successful German films of the last decades. Several aspects of the film confirm its status as action movie, including its €20 million budget and its cast of many of Germany's top movie stars – Moritz Bleibtreu, Martina Gedeck and Nadja Uhl, to name but three. The film also features numerous scenes of explosions, shootouts and

36. Christina Gerhardt, 'The Baader Meinhof Complex', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 2 (Winter 2009), (pp. 60-61), p.60.

action scenes. In a review of the film for *Der Spiegel*, Christoph Schwennicke repeats Ulrich's terminology by referring to the film as 'Porno' and confirms the trend of marketing the RAF and turning them into consumer goods, a part of the system against which they were fighting.³⁷

From the analysis of the above films, it appears there has been a definite shift in memory of the RAF and the legacy of terrorism. Whereas films produced in the direct aftermath of the 'German Autumn' represented a serious attempt to come to terms with this part of history and tried to understand the motivation behind the terrorists, the films made in later decades swapped serious political debate for style and glamour. No longer compelled to avoid identification with the terrorists themselves, *Baader* presented the Baader-Meinhof gang as legendary, mythical anti-heroes, exploiting this period of history for its dramatic potential rather than its political significance. The film emphasises its own artificiality, presenting an 'alternative' view of the terrorists which is not meant to be understood as reality. *The Raspberry Reich*, meanwhile, satirised the current trend in Germany for fetishising the RAF and revolutionary terrorism. Equating terrorism and sex, the film seems to suggest the public's appetite for terrorist violence and its associated ephemera is explicitly pornographic. *The Baader Meinhof Complex*, in contrast to the previous two films, was designed to provide a history lesson as well as a blockbuster action movie. Whereas the previous films simultaneously glamourised terrorism and made it explicit that they were constructed, satirising the self-mythologising tendencies of the terrorists and their status as style icons, *The Baader Meinhof Complex* portrayed the terrorists as sexy, attractive and cool and depicts their crimes in an exciting action-movie style. Ultimately, the history lesson of *The Baader Meinhof Complex* collapses under the weight of the irony that, in being turned into a multi-million budget blockbuster, aggressively advertised and marketed, the RAF have become poster boys and girls for the exact same capitalist system against which they were fighting. The revolution, it seems, has come full circle.

37. Christoph Schwennicke, 'Der Baader-Meinhof-Konsum', *Der Spiegel*, 24 September 2008.