

The following article deals to a large degree with a controversial dispute between the Hamburg militant autonomists, anti-imperialists and anarchists, and some of the more liberal leftist elements such as the Greens. As with so many internal-Left disputes, there are many sides to the story.

We have included the following view, from the Berlin Echomedia paper Resistance, because we find that their politics are close to ours. If you, our readers, can throw more light on this story, please let us know.

HAMBURG—Despite a lengthy police operation to divide the left-wing support in this city for six squatted houses in the district of St. Pauli, street pressure stayed the evacuation of the 'Hafenstrasse' (Harbourstreet) houses which had been planned for December 5th, 1985.

Following a large demonstration on December 4th of 1,000 autonomists, anarchists, anti-imperialists and militants, and their preparation the next day to militantly defend the radical houses, the state backed down from its original intent.

The radical houses of Hafenstrasse have been a thorn in the side of the social democratic government (Senate) of Hamburg for some time. The squatters have been and still are deeply engaged in political and cultural activity. As the Senate, the security agency, and police have continuously harassed this 'refuge of criminals' the squatters were compelled to guard themselves juridically with leases.

During the last hungerstrike of the political prisoners (December '84 to February '85) and after the death of Gunther Sare in Frankfurt, a series of riots enlivened Hamburg, and a police station was burned to the ground. All these actions, according to police, stemmed from the Hafenstrasse, so they started a large-scale press campaign to politically legitimize the 'final solution' of the Hafenstrasse problem, and to browbeat the squatters. "One has to reckon with dead persons at the evacuation" warned the cops. This was followed by numerous attacks on the houses, an incendiary attack, assaults by skin-heads, police, and others.

But the state didn't succeed with these methods to smash the solidarity between the autonomists and anti-imperialists of the Hafenstrasse and the rest of the left-wing scene in Hamburg. A broad movement, reaching deeply into the left-wing liberal spectrum (Greens, alternatives, unions, etc.) always stood in front of the houses. Their relationship with their neighbours of St. Pauli were also very good, because these people (workers, unemployed, foreign workers, etc.) saw that the (former) squatters were good partners in the common fight against the terror of the police and sanitation companies. Yet with the neo-nazis on one hand, and the press on the other, holding the Hafenstrasse as a great troublemaker in the headlines of the papers, the officials were given enough time to prepare the 'final strike'.

The social welfare centre, responsible for the rent payments for welfare recipients, quietly stopped paying rent for some of the people of the Hafenstrasse. This money is always directly remitted to the landlord, in this case a housing construction company called SAGA. Neither the welfare centre nor SAGA informed the persons concerned that the rent wasn't being paid, so this measure must be seen as a step by the responsible politicians to create a pseudo-judicial reason for the evacuation and the disruption of the group of people living in the houses.

The greatest obstacle to the success of this plan were the liberals, so, in October, the security agency attempted a cunning manoeuvre to split up the broad supporting movement. Lochte, the chief of the security police in Hamburg, gave an interview to the alternative paper *tageszeitung* (taz) in which he was able to spread unhindered his lies. He spoke about three women, living in the Hafenstrasse, who supposedly were members of the Red Army Fraction, who abused the naive and prepared the others for the terroristic politics of the RAF, etc. etc. The old story: leaders and sheep. But the attempt to split the group of the Hafenstrasse was

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only a side issue. Lochte's main intent was to spread the headline 'RAF in the Hafenstrasse' in the taz, thus carrying the split into the lines of the left-wing spectrum. This trick must be seen in the context of public discussion about the RAF and their recent activities, in which some 'innocent' persons (ordinary U.S. soldiers) were killed. The public sentiment of witch-hunting again was created and caught the Greens, the alternatives, the left-wing liberals, and everyone who is inside the system; accepting the witch-hunt on a gut level, because of their opposition to armed struggle in their mind; so they can all live easily with the violence of the state, but retire terrified in their snail's shell of the dogmatic ideology of non-violence, if someone else resorts to even a stone.

The interview with Lochte in the taz is a part of this strategy, with which he wants to enforce two essential interests of state security: on the one hand to maintain dialogue with the left-wing liberals under the motto of 'the protection of the constitution for the sake of all democrats' and to create on the other an area without justice, tolerated by these leftist liberals, for all the people who can't be included into the existing structures of power.

The taz, the only leftist daily paper in West

movements, except on the Letters to the editor page. Non-parliamentary groups were ridiculed, denounced and concealed, and all reports are composed of messages from the news agencies. No more committed journalism. Many people, from different movements (women's, anti-nuclear, anarchist, squatters) still are angry if you mention the taz. Mass cancellation of subscriptions, counter-statements, angry letters, the occupation of the offices, were some of the counter-measures taken against the changed reporting of the paper. But nothing changed; the news reports didn't become more fair. So the left has to live with (and is dependent upon) a paper about which Lochte, in the interview described above, said: "If the taz didn't exist, we (state security) would have to establish it." He compares this with the practice of the CIA, for example, to infiltrate into insurgent regions the leftist papers or to found new ones if none exists, in order to split up the resistance and to create fights within it.

Lochte puts into practice this strategy. After his interview, two reporters proudly handed Lochte a copy of the taz with the autographs of the entire editorial staff. Less generous was the treatment accorded to the people of the Hafenstrasse. An interview was

themselves, they made a mistake, as Lochte had planned and expected. About 40 people destroyed the production equipment of the Hamburg taz. Their financial crisis (the result of green opportunism) and now this attack (at first some said the damage was 200,000DM, afterwards 30,000DM damage was claimed) seemed to be the end of the taz. But the wide solidarity of liberals, greens, pacifists, church groups and others broke their silence and financially rescued the paper temporarily. And the fascistic attack on the taz saved it morally. Lochte was grinning.

The state waited to let the fronts harden, and then proceeded to reap the fruit it had been sowing. At the end of November a secret meeting of police, the Home Secretary and SAGA decided to vacate the former squatted houses, officially because some of the tenants didn't pay rent. The Hafenstrasse residents became aware of this before however, and mobilized for December 4th, the day before the planned eviction, in order to prevent this police action. The taz reported this only on December 4th, although support was needed in Hamburg on this day and the mobilization had been organized five days earlier.

The demonstration on the 4th of 1,000 autonomists, anarchists, anti-imperialists and other militants from all over West Germany signalled that the eviction would not be possible even without the presence of the leftist liberals.

On the next day these 1,000 people were well prepared (helmets, stones, molotov cocktails, catapults, etc.) to militantly defend the houses against the 600 police being gathered in St. Pauli. For a long time the police and politicians responsible for the action didn't dare to proceed with their plans and it seemed a complete triumph for militant politics over the state and reformism. But in the afternoon a law court issued a temporary prohibition of the eviction, and faced with this decree, the Senate renounced the eviction. The media, including the taz, emphasized this juridical decision while indignantly reporting that the Hafenstrasse remained occupied. But the court made this decision only because it was obvious that the



ARROW MARKS BODY OF GUNTHER SARE, KILLED BY POLICE DURING ANTI-FASCIST PROTEST

Germany today, started with the alternative movement at the end of the '70's as a forum for all discussions between leftists. For a long time it was really open for all trends of the movement. It reached its highest circulation during the fights in Berlin to support the squatted houses ('80-'81). At this time the paper was economically successful, because it did not side with this or that trend of the movement. But just as the squatters were defeated and with them the dream of a free and self-determined (autonomous) society, in the taz, those people who represented the politics of the green parliamentary way prevailed. Today the taz is essentially the central organ of the Green Party and is written by professional journalists. No longer is there a place for the more radical groups or

to take place under the headline 'Solidarity with Hafenstrasse' and a preceding conference with the squatters was agreed upon, but which never took place although the squatters were eager to assist in the writing of the article. The full interview text, some 40 pages, vanished, and only a shortened text with comments from the two reporters appeared in the taz. And this abridged version expressed exactly Lochte's objective. This behaviour and the contents of the published text caused a furious reaction from the autonomists and the anti-imperialists, but the uncritical silence of the left-wing liberals seemed to imply that Lochte's strategy was working.

At this stage, when the people of the Hafenstrasse were forced to defend them-

forced eviction of the houses would cause a violent riot in Hamburg. So nevertheless it was the 'pressure of the street' that was the decisive reason for the abandonment of the eviction.

Another result of these events in Hamburg is the insight by the radical and anti-parliamentary spectrum that they have, independent of left-wing liberals, with whom it is necessary to cooperate in many cases, to create their own structures to improve communications between the various groups and to reach a clearer understanding of the social situation and the forms of resistance and strategies to use. It became evident that a better form of organization than the present lax and dissolute one was needed by the autonomist, anarchist, and all the anti-parlia-