

Abstract

The terrorist group Red Army Fraction ("RAF"), which jeopardized the public security with their attacks in West Germany since the seventies and killed more than three thousand people, issued a statement of official closure on April 20, 1998 after 28 years of its activity. This thesis tries to answer the question whether the fall of the Berlin Wall brought the final dissolution of the group. In addition to geopolitical changes it is also necessary to take into account the instruments of the national security policy and the split of opinion within the group. The geopolitical reversal in 1989 had two negative impacts on the RAF. Firstly it meant a devastating ideological defeat for them, even though the former GDR or any other Eastern Bloc country did not respond fully to their expectations. Another shock for them was the arrest of ten former RAF-members who were hiding in the GDR under a false identity. They eventually filed an extensive testimony, so that their sentences could be commuted. Federal Republic of Germany, which had not been too successful in the fight against terrorism up to this time, used the internal weakness of the RAF caused by political circumstances and it finally introduced new instruments to further destabilize the group and led to a rift between prisoners and members at large. While a group of one opinion advocated the continuation of a violent struggle against the state, others advocated the idea of creating a "social opposition from below" (*soziale Gegenmacht von unten*). Finally, the split within the RAF proved as fatal, which was a result of the collapse of real existing socialism, and of the tactics of reconciliation from the state.