In an execution aimed at painting a picture of State omnipotence, the BKA sealed off streets and forced their way, firearms drawn, into women’s and family members’ homes, private workplaces, and research/archival centres. Another reason given for the raids as “Article 129a paragraph of the Criminal Code, that is to say, the crime of terrorism,” they searched the premises without warrants, in which they seized audio and video recordings, personal mail, address books, mailing lists, and access to computers relating to human genetics, pre-natal diagnosis, and reproduced and reprogrammed embryos. The grounds for the seizure of these documents were their “possible role in financing terrorism” or “genetic engineering. Twenty-three women were detained at police centres where they were photographed, fingerprinted, questioned, and in some cases strip-searched, before being released.

In Hamburg that afternoon, Ulla Penselin remained under arrest, charged with “membership in the terrorist organization Revolutionary Cells of the Red Zora.” The operations of the terrorist organization Revolutionary Cells of the Red Zora, Ulla Penselin was arrested by the GSG 9 SWAT Squad after a two-day standoff in her apartment searching for her, charged with “membership in the terrorist organization Revolutionary Cells of the Red Zora,” and suspicion of participation in the October 66 sabotage attack on Luthansa to protest both the forcible deportation of women seeking abortion and the promotion of South-East Asia sex-tourism. The authorities announced dramatically that they had now cracked two cells of Roten Zora and, on February 18, 88, eighteen people, were arrested. They announce a search for four related “terrorists-at-large.” The GSG 9 SWAT Squad that the Model Police State has brought a massive crackdown upon. On February 16, but it is the first witchhunt to crunch down specifically on the women, but not the men.

Neither of these women are anonymous, but rather are well known in the feminist circles. Ulla Penselin has been running a community printshop in Hamburg for ten years as well as organizing the network exposed population control policy and genetic technology. Ingrid Strohl has worked for seven years as a journalist with “EMMA,” the widely-circulated liberal-feminist magazine, and campaigned for the rights of refugees and immigrants. Irmtraut Gellert has been locked down in prison after being denied bail based on the prosecution’s claim of “probable flight,” and are confined under the 15-year-old law of “special regulations for foreign political prisoners.” The pivotal factor is the isolation, or “white terror,” that has become the trademark of the German government’s method of breaking down prisoners: non-association with any other prisoners or political or general; solitary one-hour daily yard exercise; 23 hours a day in a windowless security cell with empty neighbouring cells; screened lawyer visits; censorship of mail; a two-hour visit only once each month; restricted number of books; and an absolute absence of prison uniform only. And even this though they have not even been brought to trial but rather are merely charged, with evidence as soft as “confessions” or “testimonies” in cafés in Ulla’s case, and the purchasing of a clock in 1986 by a man who has been linked to the exploded clock shrapnel found at the Luthansa attack. Since the charges have only weak evidence to back them up, and the raids have netted little. The authorities were already well aware of the feminist community, which has escalated in the months since the raids. The police have searched for further personal connections and turn themselves into informers. The authorities have created a new term: “Probable Attack Issues” which, when combined with their powers under Article 129a, gives them grounds for harassment of all those involved in any underground legal work as well. This will be their strategy for trying to destroy the movements resisting repressing culture, xenophobia, and refugee deportation policy. Their intent is to silence all critics including journalists, lawyers, and health professionals and keep the community under siege. Considering the high profile of the so-called “spontaneous” evidence against them, cause is created for questioning the timing of this witchhunt. Sabotage actions by Roten Zora had increased in the last two or three years, often with very spectacular results, greatly mobilizing the police. Public awareness has increased because they grew for the women’s struggle for justice. So the police can present it as a powerplay, both premature and miscarried, to sow the seeds of suspicion and fear among feminists. Certainly neither of these have been involved in any acts of terrorism, but there is a few “coincidences” to be explained by any legal “guilt” and further, much of this government has been inclined toward sympathy for the actions carried out by Roten Zora. They have been operating since the mid-70s and in cooperation with the Revolutionary Cells, have carried out 250 attacks, all within the context of current political fights. There have been confrontations issues of militarization, nuclear technology, Palestine, South Africa, Palestine, apartheid, asylum solidarity, and human genetics. During 1987, to support the various militant efforts of South Korean women strikers in the German-owned textile factories, RZ launched a series of violent attacks against the textile factories. Only then did the owners finally capitulate and raise the wages of the workers and the salaries, and meet all the women’s demands. This has caused a stark realization of the government and its urge for retaliation reached maximum boil.

Are the authorities’ claims of having paralyzed this women’s movement or just police hype? To paraphrase an anonymous German feminist: “The structure of women’s organizations, and Roten Zora, has always been poured out by the police.” No, it is not likely that this first blast against RZ will be successful in making the women invisible or crushing the women behind bars.

The call from the defense groups is “freedom for Ingrid Strohl and Ulla Penselin” with nothing less than that. International publicity and support by political prisoners and the feminist community are strong by Standing Rock. Write the women in prison to let them know their isolation is only physical. Ulla Penselin can be reached by the Ermittlungsrichter am BGH, Herrenstraße 45, 7000 Karlsruhe 1, Germany. For more info, or to send solidarity letters and financial donations, write to: West German Solidarity Group at: Stadt Rettung, Maastrichter Straße, 5000 Koln 1, West Germany; P.O. Box 901, Schwarzenberg, Paulinenplatz, 24 Hamburg 4, West Germany.

BACKGROUND

On the Road is a game where we generally tell our readers what’s happening in the collective and how the current issue of OR came into being. It was a slow process putting out R22: lack of money, resources, time, and energy have been the main challenges. The issue is grown to ten people with the last issue. In the early summer we had a weekend and retreat out of the city and made plans to reveal the new title. We began to write and gather material for a new issue. We were, however, unusually low on funds. At one point it was delayed as we could make some money. We held two successful pub nights and a fundraising gig with four great local bands. The gig especially took a lot of effort and cost us more than the money we could make. We didn’t have much energy. A combination of burnout and work on other projects stalled completion of this issue. Several of us were distracted from the paper when we unexpectedly got jobs.

Enthusiasm remained low through the winter months, with fewer and fewer of us working on OR. Recently we’ve reengaged enough to push forward on the project. We’ve been collecting a mixture of older and new material. We’re featuring a discussion paper which raises important ideas and questions about the role of new restorative justice process, which we hope to write with the discussion with your feedback.

We are not sure what direction OR will take from here. We plan to continue publishing. We can use your input to help rejuvenate the paper. Please send us information, articles, letters, and your donations. Subscriptions are still two years for what you can afford; free to prisoners. Bulk rates available to anyone wanting to help with distribution. Thank you for your continued support.