

# Bommi Baumann Nabbed

Fifth Estate Collective

1981

The following report on the arrest and deportation of Bommi Baumann comes to us from the *Islington Gutter Press* by way of *Black Flag* newspaper.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, Michael “Bommi” Baumann, for years on the list of West Germany’s 40 most wanted left-wing terrorists, was arrested by the British Special Branch at his home in London. 36 hours later he was on the plane to Frankfurt. Now in prison in Berlin, he awaits trial on a list of charges including membership in the outlawed 2<sup>nd</sup> June Movement, taking part in three bank robberies, the attempted murder of a policeman and an explosion in which a worker was killed.

Bommi lived as “Alex” in England from the end of 1979, finding friends among the young punks, and the Music scene around Chat’s Palace. “I’d nearly given up on rock with Mr. Dylan and the Stones and all those other pensioners.”

33-year-old “Alex” was liked by the youth as a “grandfather” figure. He was fond of baby sitting too. He got odd jobs as a carpenter and also some royalties from his book *Wie Alles Anfing*, first published in 1975, confiscated by the police, later republished, and which was then the source of subsequent trials.

The book tells the story of his life from his early days as an apprentice: “The first-day of my apprenticeship, on the ride to the construction site, it suddenly hit me—you’re gonna be doing this for 50 years; there’s no escaping it. The scare of that just stuck in my bones. I had to look for ways of getting out.”

The book describes his early life in Kommune 1, his time in prison for slashing the tires of 100 cars, the early days of the student SDS movement, the wild days of what were Furry Freak Brothers style urban guerillas, the Roaming Hash Rebels, a second urban guerilla group calling itself Tupamaros/ West Berlin, the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement, and the eventual shooting by the police of his best friend, Georg von Rauch in 1971.

On that day, Baumann threw away his gun. He said, “It was only the fear of love from which I fled into absolute violence. The call to throw away the gun is seen by revolutionaries as compromise or even as betrayal. It should be understood, though, as a turning toward a constructive concept, an opening up to new insights and experiments, an effort to maintain life so we don’t get buried in the rubble of the collapsing system. The other side thinks about extermination often enough.”

Baumann was eventually picked up for using a phony passport which he had gotten from a drop-out in Goa in 1978. “I don’t need it any more,” said the helpful stranger. For three months Bommi used the passport successfully with the Social Security. Then the “helpful” stranger reported its loss to the German consulate. Via the central criminal computer in Germany, the name on the passport went to Interpol and eventually to Scotland Yard.

(The Fifth Estate Bookstore will donate all profits on the sale of this book to the efforts to free and defend Bommi Baumann. One interesting note for Detroiters, at the time of Baumann’s guerilla activity, his group liked the music of the MC-5 and mentioned the band in their publications. The German police thought this was another local guerilla group and spent time searching for it.)

WIE ALLES ANFING: HOW IT ALL BEGAN by Bommi Baumann with statements by Heinrich Böll & Daniel Cohn-Bendit

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