

## Cocaine Vampires

Kippenberger was the only one of the *Neuen Wilden* that I really liked. Especially that classic painting of his where you just see these funny hooks, like the arm of a swastika, everywhere. Swastika parts here and there, but try as you might, you can't see a swastika. The picture is called "Try as I Might, I Can't See A Swastika". I thought that was hilarious. Unfortunately, he lived kind of an extreme life as well. He's been dead for quite a while.

Moritz R®, Der Plan

**Wolfgang Spelmans** In London, we were on especially friendly terms with WIRE. Their manager had offered us a gig with them. After that, we'd meet with WIRE down at the pub fairly often and drink together. And they didn't mind when we came to their practice space to watch them rehearse. Then we did a show with them at the Electric Ballroom. WIRE were our absolute favourites. They could bring this incredible energy into a venue. So of course they were the headliners. They showed up hauling these huge aluminium road cases across the stage. And we set up our equipment out of cardboard boxes. We'd never played in front of an audience that size before – it was 1200 people. All the press were there. We were fired up.

**Gabi Delgado** WIRE were the band you just had to go see in London at that time. And on that night, we took over their town. We simply blew them off stage. They were completely shocked at the energy we unleashed there.

**Wolfgang Spelmans** That's how we made a name for ourselves in London. Afterwards, we were just thrilled. Everybody started treating us like the new sensation. And WIRE were just beside themselves. They said, "we're not playing with DAF any more." There wasn't any contact after that. We didn't meet up together any more.

**Alfred Hilsberg** I visited DAF in England around that time, while they were recording. They played the album for me for the first time, *Die Kleinen und die Bösen*. I thought it was an unbelievable kick. It was like the music of my dreams. Up until that point I simply couldn't imagine that a German band could be that good. It seemed to me to be the fulfilment of the dream that they had been working on for so long.

**Robert Görl** We were pretty successful in England. Even though the English couldn't even pronounce our name. To them, we were just "Dee Ay Eff." Although they did think it was interesting that that meant German-American Friendship. But the fact that skinheads were into us didn't have anything to do with words like that. We just worked up so much energy that it was inevitable that military types gravitated to us. All at once there were these boys in our audience who were into unbelievable power. And they had clean shaven heads.

We once had a show in Middlesbrough. That was the most hardcore thing I've ever experienced. Middlesbrough is a totally industrial city, in a sort of English *Ruhrgebiet*.

**Gabi Delgado** The nuclear power plant was right in the middle of town, heh heh. Right on the harbour. I thought that made sense.

**Robert Görl** We drove there by ourselves. And then the really big surprise: as we went to the venue for soundcheck, there were already 100 skinheads waiting for us. We'd been booked by skinheads; it was a Skin club. But we weren't about to be scared off. It was exactly the

opposite: “tonight we blow the doors off!” So we went back to the hotel, and as we went to the club that evening, the whole place was full of about 700, 800 skins. The vibes were palpable. It was clear: we have no choice now but to blow the doors off. Because if we don’t, we’re done for.

So we had a monster of a gig. We went on stage – and we weren’t alone there. The Head Skin stood there on stage with his arms folded – looking powerful, his legs apart – and said “come on, guys”. As in: “Let’s see what you’ve got. Either you kick ass or we’ll fuck you up and then we’ll fuck up your equipment.” We just tore it up! I hit the whole drum kit in a total fury, and Gabi just screamed out his German lyrics...

**Gabi Delgado** It was a kind of hell. Nothing but Skins. And the leader of them all was on stage. We started with “Gewalt”. They thought that was pretty strange. They only really listened to Ska. Then we played “Kebabträume”, with the “*Deutschland, Deutschland, alles ist vorbei* (Germany, Germany, it’s all over)” refrain. And then everything turned around. Suddenly, all we heard was “*Deutschland! Deutschland! Sieg Heil!*” And then we played „Mussolini“ with the line about Adolf Hitler. And at that they all stood at attention, ha ha. And their *Führer* is with us on stage the whole time. Sort of like a censor. I liked that. But of course they went absolutely wild. They tore into each other like animals!

**Robert Görl** After that they were completely into it. They just jumped and danced. And once their leader noticed that we were really nailing it, he jumped off the stage and let us play. If it had been otherwise, he’d have sicced his boys on us. I heard later from some other English folks who knew about Middlesbrough and the club there. Apparently, it wasn’t uncommon for a band that didn’t play hard enough to be destroyed. No guitars with their necks still on, no amplifiers left. Nothing. That wasn’t a game. And it wasn’t a show any more either.

**Gabi Delgado** We had created a kind of warrior caste. Our own DAF culture. It really wasn’t just music. It wasn’t just style. It was a way of life. Extremely radical. No fear. That really worked with Görl, Haas, and me. Spelmanns gradually became a sort of irritant. But, funnily enough, the next one who had to go was Haas – who had helped start the paramilitary thing. Something had to develop out of all this hate-energy, so that it would be a good thing. Specifically, love. There had to be love in there. Because you can’t live that way for long. That’s why the male bonding thing we had had to turn into something homoerotic, the way it crystallized out for me and Robert. So there wasn’t any room for Haas anymore. Haas was also too undisciplined. He had a fairly antisocial manner. He never bathed. We all stayed together in a tiny room. Completely illegally.

**Robert Görl** There were six of us squatting together in this basement for about nine months. And Chrislo – after a while, he just lay around. And just stank. He didn’t want to do any more gigs. He didn’t want to go to any record companies. He didn’t want anything. Just flop in the basement and send out his stench, ha ha. Haas was really a good friend of mine. A real buddy. But the last few times we just dragged him along with us, like a stinking sack. He got stuck on the negative surface of the whole thing. I had a lot of punk in me at the time, too. I thought it was good that he got in people’s faces and broke taboos. That’s what DAF stood for as well. But Haas just had the one thing – the negative aspect. At some point, we just said. “OK, that’s it! Haas, go away!”

**Gabi Delgado** That was during the time that love was blossoming between Robert and me. Other people annoyed us. When we travelled, we’d always share a double room and discuss things: “We’ll start another band, and call it DEUTSCHLAND.” We thought, “it’s no wonder,

we were thinking conventionally and trying this with musicians.” When DAF started, we didn’t have all the machines yet. But in 1980, there were all these new machines all of a sudden. And we decided that we’d really rather work with machines.

At first, though, it was still really hard. We’d blown all of the money. We didn’t have any money or a place to stay. Absolutely nothing. Then things got even more paramilitary. We were really living on the street. And there it was a good thing to be pretty hard. We mooched off of everybody. When you’re on the street, you use this special sort of intuition. You’re like a sort of animal. You really just pick up things by sense of smell. You go in here and get a coffee and a roll, and then you go in there and meet someone who’ll let you crash with him. You develop special instincts.

**Robert Görl** I lived in this abandoned, totally rotted out house in Camden Town. In the middle of winter. There wasn’t any heat. I slept there on this sort of diseased mattress in an ice cold room, where nobody else was. Covered in newspapers, because of the cold and the disease. That was just survival.

**Wolfgang Spelmanns** After that hole of a cellar, we crashed in a lot of different places. We went all over the place. After one gig, Daniel Miller from Mute Records shows up. And we explained our problem to him. So I slept in his office for a few weeks. For the first time in about a year, I could pull myself together and calm down a little.

**Gabi Delgado** I was staying with a girlfriend of Gudrun Gut’s. Carrie. Because of her, I got beat up the worst I’d been in my life to that point. By skinheads, funnily enough. At that time, I was running around as a skinhead and I was with Carrie in a pub. And a couple of Skins showed up and started hitting on her. And I say, “hey, leave her alone!” Then they say, “Where are you from? You’re not English!” “I’m German. *Sieg Heil!*” One word led to another. First, it was “Germany and England!” But then five minutes later: “You asshole!” And when we left, they came after me and kicked the shit out of me.

**Wolfgang Spelmanns** In early 1980, we went to Berlin via London and went on tour with Gudrun Gut, Beate Bartel, and Bettina Köster’s band – MANIA D. We all became friends very quickly. And Blixa Bargeld showed up in that crowd fairly often. Always dressed entirely in rubber. We’d all gotten into leather in the meantime. And Blixa was completely into rubber. I never saw him without a rubber jacket and these completely normal black galoshes. I always thought he must have incredibly sweaty feet.

**Gabi Delgado** When I first met Blixa, he was so fabulous. He was the local coke dealer. He brought us our cocaine. And then he’d stand on stage, completely coked-up: “I want blood!” Like a cocaine vampire.

**Andrew Unruh** After I finished school I moved to Amsterdam and studied piano restoration. Blixa visited me there and told me how much had happened musically in Berlin and that we could start a band with Gudrun and Beate. So I went back – and set up a workshop in Eisengrau’s basement.

**Blixa Bargeld** Then I bought Bettina Köster's old *Eisengrau* shop from her. But nothing got sold there any more. You'd just go there in the afternoon, hoping to meet interesting people. Musicians or Super 8 filmmakers. They'd all just hang around and talk to each other. One day some guy walks into the store and says he's booking some club and asks if we want to play on the first of April. I said, "um, sure." He asks, "What's the name of the act?" "EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN." From the outside, it might have seemed like that was carefully planned. In fact, it was just spontaneous inspiration. From the outside, it might have seemed that an awful lot was happening in Berlin. In fact, it was only two dozen people – in various combinations. In that sense, Gudrun was a deciding figure. If someone in her band went on vacation for two weeks, she'd use that time to start another band.

**Gudrun Gut** Berlin was a sort of artist's paradise. The rents were low. You could try out a lot of things without having to starve right away. So that's how I could play in NEUBAUTEN while I was still in MANIA D. Blixa wanted to start a band and asked Beate and me if we would join him. So we practised some in his basement. Our first gig was in a disco called Moon. There was nothing really exciting about that, because there were at most fifty people there. There were some Super 8 movies, and we played music to them. I played a Korg MS-20 and sang, Beate played bass. That was still all very improvised – really free.

**Inga Humpe** I first saw the NEUBAUTEN play on this factory floor. They played behind bars. It looked like a cage. In the middle of the room. Blixa, Andrew, Gudrun, and an unbelievably pretty bassist – Beate. She swung her dark brown hair back and forth and always played just one bass note. That was an amazing show. I was flipping out, and they stood there like they were in the zoo, behind bars, and didn't look at anybody. And I thought, "that is so cool!"

**Andrew Unruh** We played there behind a sort of fence that went up to the ceiling. That was of course totally hip. We could do what we wanted. And the audience couldn't throw beer cans at us.

**Gudrun Gut** The stage was hardly elevated at all. And somebody in the audience suddenly started winding himself up in the fence. So I stopped playing and watched it from the other side. I thought, "that's wild!" There was something extraordinarily raw about it. Like injured animals.

We didn't have any of the metal stuff on stage with us at that point. We just had an aluminium cookie sheet instead of a cymbal on my drum set, because it made a better crash. Andrew did that too, because we would borrow things from each other. Later, he just built it up further. But in the beginning of NEUBAUTEN, it was mostly about trying things out. Things were still really playful. And I thought that was great. But when we went into the studio to make a single, we started fighting. What Blixa wanted wasn't what I wanted. And since we also still had MANIA D., it was clear that this was mostly his project. It was clear that he was really looking for his own way. And that was the way things would go. The only thing was that we were all equals in MANIA D. There, we all did what we wanted. And suddenly, with Blixa, I was supposed to do what he wanted. Beate stayed a little longer than I did. But I said to him, "Nope, do it by yourself." I just didn't want to be an employee. I was too wild for that, ha ha.

**Beate Bartel** I always had a hell of a lot of fun with Andrew. We were always like, "we're going to do what want to anyway." But my interest suddenly disappeared when Andrew and I wanted to switch. I wanted to play the drums once. But Blixa screamed, "No! Go back where you were. You can't do that." And that was that, finally. I didn't want him making up rules for me. To hell with that. I had absolutely no interest in despotic bandleaders.

**Bettina Köster** In MANIA D., we worked differently than men's bands do. It wasn't like we said "now play this chord and then this one." Instead, it was "now we have this feeling and then this feeling will come along."

**Gudrun Gut** We asked ourselves what was really important to us. And it was the really big feelings: love, pain, separation. But femininity didn't mean "cuddle" to us! A designer at the record company we recorded with later always instantly associated the word "perfume" with the phrase "woman band". We didn't want that at all. We also didn't like most New Wave woman bands. Like LILIPUT from Switzerland. I always thought they were way too nice. For them, everything was aimed at the head. Everything about them, including their bouncy drum sound, had this lightness that went straight into your brain. That wasn't my thing at all.

**Mania D.** aimed at the body. We were a guts band. We always insisted on a lot of bass. And we were really loud.

**Blixa Bargeld** That was what impressed me about MANIA D., right from the beginning. Not just that they were harder than other woman bands. They were also the only women to have successfully avoided all of the clichés associated with woman bands.

**Gudrun Gut** Then all of a sudden there was this amazing MANIA D. hype, without our really having played out much.

**Inga Humpe** The main thing between us and MANIA D. was pure competition. The whole Berlin scene really sort of tip-toed around each other from the beginning. But once the first bands had formed, people became extremely unfriendly to each other. You didn't talk to each other. Boundaries were the most important thing. Don't be too soft or too trusting. Don't be too friendly. That would be seen as weakness. None of this hippy "Peace, Love, and Unity" nonsense.

We'd play together fairly often. But you wouldn't really greet each other. It was really about: who's going to say "hi" first? On the other hand, I thought that this coldness in the music and in the way we acted to each other mirrored the way things really were. And there was a sort of freedom to it. I was in drama school at the time. And there we had that group dynamic pedagogical bullshit. But there was still just one director who told everybody what to do. Having come out of punk, I couldn't get into that at all.

My problems with the social scene around the music had to do with myself. I was nervous, lacking in confidence and arrogant at the same time. I was just never sure about one thing: does anybody else think I'm OK? And I thought that all the other bands sucked. Terrible! Awful! I did think that Beate Bartel looked good when NEUBAUTEN played. But I thought the music was retarded. I thought it was all shit. My own thing was the only thing that wasn't shit. So it got to the point that musicians didn't even exist for you, and you didn't exist for them. I remember calling Gudrun one time. I wanted to talk to her about something. If I could borrow some piece of equipment at a gig. She just said something like: "Take care of your own fucking business."

**Bettina Köster** Gudrun probably wanted to get along at some level. But she never showed it. I was always a little afraid of Gudrun. And Inga and Annette Humpe were *really* afraid of Gudrun, hehheh. When I'd talk to them now and then because their practice room was right next to ours, Gudrun would say: "Hey, how can you talk to those dumb chicks? They play such shitty music!"

**Annette Humpe** Bettina and Gudrun thought NEONBABIES were just commercial. And of course it hurt to hear over and over again indirectly how stupid we were. Especially afterwards, with IDEAL. The thing was, at first, I talked shit about Bettina and Gudrun, for example, as much as they did me. And you never said it to the other person's face. I always thought, "What should I talk to them for? They don't know anything about music. They're happy if they all occasionally hit the same note." That was just playing around for me. They might as well have sold shoes.

**Bettina Köster** In order for MANIA D. to be more successful, it probably would have helped if we were cuter. Not quite as rough. But we weren't there to make pretty, successful music. It was no accident that our motto was "play everything except what you've been taught to play". It was about breaking the rules of music. Gudrun always talked about the "music of jackhammers". All the noises around us in the city became music. It was also important to us to look into our own pain. It was no accident that Beate came up with the name MANIA D. It was no accident that we sought out the ugliest, brokenest, and hardest city in Germany. We seemed to attract emotional cripples. But we wanted out. The typical story of tenement children yearning for the sun. And as for our love for Berlin – that was purely out of necessity. Otherwise we'd have gone insane. It was a constructive way to get out your own aggression and loneliness. And that's also why Gudrun couldn't deal at all with people who did happy things. Like Inga.

**Gudrun Gut** For some strange reason Inga wanted to join MANIA D. all of a sudden. And we said "oh no, please don't!"

**Inga Humpe** I just noticed that I was completely alone with my incredible rage in the NEONBABIES, and that bands like NEUBAUTEN had something happening that was completely their own. We'd done some shows with them, too. One time Blixa just throw himself onto the floor. Nobody had any idea how to help him any more, hehheh. I just that it was incredibly real. And compared to NEUBAUTEN or MANIA D., we weren't exactly a band that people were scared of.

We had a show one time in Quasimodo, which was across the street from the Paris Bar. It was already a really legendary place where artists had been doing exhibitions for ever. So I went over there because Kippenberger was hanging out there at that moment. He had just had a performance in the Café Einstein where shot at a fake guitar in a wastebasket on stage. It was brutally funny, And it was way cooler than me. So I asked him "come on over. We'll playing over there." And Kippenberger goes, "Oh, it's you. You guys play that Macy's punk." On the one side I was angry, of course. But I thought, "shit, he's right." We were middle-class punks. Macy's punks!

**Jäki Eldorado** To be a true punk rocker, it didn't hurt to take yourself apart every once in a while. Like Blixa, when he said "look at me – I'm nothing." The thing is, though, that Blixa, unlike me, could say things like that with unbelievable self-confidence. Or, to put it another way, with this completely satisfied arrogance that he gave off.

**Blixa Bargeld** I never seriously referred to NEUBAUTEN'S stuff as noise. I only called it that because it was simpler. I was really thinking about the extent to which my music actually had to do with my environment. I thought, "I really shouldn't be playing guitar. I should really work with the materials around me. And I really shouldn't record it in a studio, but I really have to do it so that it actually relates to my sense of life and the situation I'm living in." And

it's because of these ideas that our first single was recorded in an Autobahn overpass – not far from where I'm from. A grade school classmate had shown it to me once. It was a hollow steel construction. And there were these inner chambers you could get into.

**Andrew Unruh** We had to take flashlights with us. Otherwise it was pitch black. I'd never seen anything like it. All around just blackness. Like a cave. We were only there for three or four hours – and just that one time. We taped it with a cassette machine. And that was the A-side of the first single, "Für den Untergang". The so-called "Stahl-version" (steel version). The studio version was the B-side.

**Alex Hacke** We *really* made some noise. We *really* heard some noise. We concerned ourselves with disgusting material. We did things that were so disgusting that these uniformed punks who were everywhere all of a sudden wouldn't have known what to do with. We were really into leftover food. We taped up left over food inside of a display window in Eisengrau. It looked really good. Rolls. Cheese slices. It was the whole recycling thing that punk was supposed to be originally. Same thing with our hair. Really ratty. Just cut some holes in there. That was harder than the normal punk deal. There was this virtuosity of ugliness. For me, that was absolutely the most important thing: dealing with trash. And disgust. I thought that the way Blixa and Andrew lived was fascinating. It was unbelievable. Yoghurt containers full of piss next to the bed. There was something to that. For me, a little boy from a clean middle class family, it was fascinating. Creative dissipation.

There were an awful lot of kids in Dschungel who spent a lot of money on their clothes. We just laughed at them. We cultivated our own aesthetic. Simply using trash. Clothes held together with screws or thumb tacks. Rubber. Airplane safety belts as a belt. That was really in. We sold the strangest fashion in Eisengrau. All kinds of clothes from the junkyard. We –still in our teems -- decided for ourselves what was sexy and what wasn't. I got a girlfriend even though I spent the whole day trying to look as disgusting as possible. It was great just finding the stuff. I had a gas station attendant's jacket that said Shell on it. But I could identify with it – because I'd pulled it out of the garbage myself. Or we'd sell stuff from East Germany. That was revolutionary. That was super punk. You could really play around with stuff like that. Of course I was a poseur, too.

**Andrew Unruh** Alex Hacke was only 14 at the time – but I took him very seriously. He just showed up in Eisengrau one day – and just never left. Because he didn't want to go home. And finally he didn't go to school any more, either. He was pretty daring. I could only applaud that.

**Blixa Bargeld** At 15, he played in more bands than he'd lived years. In one of those bands – MEKANIK DESTRUKTIV KOMMANDÖ – he had three different roles. He kept getting kicked out. First he was the guitarist, then bassist, and then he rejoined as the drummer.

**Frieder Butzmann** Alex Hacke always came by the Zensor shop. Afterwards he'd often come back with me to my place and play around with the machines. Sometimes he was in NEUBAUTEN, then he was out again. Once he came to me crying because Blixa had fired him.

**Alex Hacke** My whole little world was always looking for something. It was really exciting. We'd say "hey, let's just sell copied cassettes!" We started the first cassette label in Eisengrau. We called it Eisengrau. I stopped selling records. My whole life began to revolve around cassettes. We'd cut up cassette loops. Open up the cassettes and insert the looped tape. Of course, it sounded like shit and was incredibly noisy. And the more copies you made, the

worse it sounded. But that wasn't important. We'd sell fifth generation cassettes. They didn't sound like the original anymore. Everything was completely warped, haha. Total mud. The first product ever to come out with the name EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN was "Stahlmusik", a cassette with the whole session from the Autobahn overpass.

**Blixa Bargeld** I was always making tapes. I'd be at it through entire afternoons in Eisengrau. Just everything. How folks would come by and talk and sing. That's how I finally drove Eisengrau out of business. I'd never had any records there. After a while, no more clothes, either. And finally there was nothing. Instead, I just did the Eisengrau label and just copied cassettes.

**Andrew Unruh** The first show we did outside of Berlin was at some lawyer's party in Munster – in a private home with a garden and mostly people in suits, whom we upset pretty badly.

**Alex Hacke** It was like – "Hey, there's these folks in Munster – they want to do a show with us. How do we get there?" Then we drove to Munster and were so thrilled that there were twenty people there, listening to us in complete confusion, that we honestly forgot to ask for any money on our way out. And then we drove home.

**Blixa Bargeld** At that time, there were some pretty powerful looking places in Berlin, especially in the old center. Scars in the landscape. Where nothing could grow. That whole area – Potsdamer Platz, the Anhalter Station – was our preferred wasteland.

**Frieder Butzmann** I met Andrew at the Anhalter Station once. He was looking for some metal parts.

**Andrew Unruh** Years before, while doing home work, I'd plucked the metal spring on my desk lamp and noticed that it vibrated for quite a while. Then at 15, I found a spring in the garbage – almost a meter long. Apparently, taxi drivers in Berlin had these bullet proof screens built into their taxis for a while – because of some taxi driver getting murdered. The screens hung from these long, heavy screens. Then they all got taken out, because the passengers didn't like them.

I couldn't figure out what to do with these springs for years. You really couldn't just pull it apart by yourself. It was only about three centimeters in diameter – but the metal was about three millimeters thick. At some point I pulled it out in a vise and bounced a metal tube off of it while it was stretched. I just thought, "what bass!" That was a real highlight for me. And that became what we called the bass spring. I was totally fascinated by it. It was just as loud as a bass drum. I played this bass spring from our first gig onwards. And I added a square meter baking sheet as a cymbal. Back then everybody was gradually getting cookie tins for their drum sets. But that was mostly just to get an occasional rattle. And I was really being pure about it.

I had this strange attraction to metal. There were some pieces of steel that I just had to have. As long as they were big and heavy. And that's why I go to building sites more often and take things that I could turn into furniture or musical instruments: sewage pipes, oil tanks, and especially metal ductwork. They were beautiful. New metal.

**Frieder Butzmann** He used to say “do it right – steal from building sites.” He wrote that on some piece of metal he’d put on his drum kit. EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN’S the whole noise idea, the metal – that all came from Andrew. He’s NEUBAUTEN’S musical roots. To me, Andrew *is* NEUBAUTEN. Over and over I’d see him take some equipment or other from a building site. You could never call him before five in the evening, because he was out all night stealing his musical instruments, so to speak. NEUBAUTEN – they were really hardcore. There was nothing calculated about it. It was real. They never tried to copy English bands. Not like all those left-wing punk bands from Kreuzberg – none of whom had that special Berlin thing.

**Gudrun Gut** Since Berlin was lousy with hippies, somebody had to take care of the structure. And that’s why there was a lot of flirting with military imagery. We wanted to be straight. And not just smoke pot all day long. We didn’t smoke pot, wither. Absolutely not. That was just boring.

**Bettina Köster** One time we played this women’s festival in the Metropol that had been organised by European lesbians. They only booked us because we were women. They didn’t know our music at all. The other women’s band who played all had little tables with candles on them on stage. And they all came with folk guitars and sang. They were all frilly with their little dresses. And we were all about no frills.

**Beate Bartel** That lesbian festival wasn’t my idea. And I also had a special outfit. I’d cut my hair pretty short. And I wore a black military shirt, a tight grey skirt, and high-heeled shoes. The whole band had on sort of military outfits. They had problems with that.

**Gudrun Gut** That was really hard. These women really wanted to hear folky sounds. And Isabel, our singer, was more of a punk type. She went onstage with her skinhead hair-do and Doc Martens. And then we all got into our power attitude and sort of punked out. That split the whole audience.

**Bettina Köster** Half of the audience thought it was just terrific. The other half found it grating. They yelled out “Nazi whores!” And they ran to the mixing board: “turn that shit down!” Then others ran up: “turn it back up!” Then they started screaming and each other and throwing beer in each other’s faces! And we started it all, hehheh. They’d never seen anything like it. At some point everybody was fighting. There were even two girls on the stage who were just screaming at each other. And I got between them: “haven’t you been fighting enough?” And one of them said “not yet!” and whacked me on the ear with an open hand. And then she said “now I have!” Afterwards I noticed that my eardrum was ruptured.

**Ben Becker** All of the fucking squatters got on my nerves. I was just looking for some fun. I can still remember the first big street fight since the 60s. The battle of the Hermannplatz. In the Summer of 1980. It was supposed to be punks against poppers. The poppers had some big meeting connected to a fashion show in a disco on the Hermannplatz. There’d been talk for a couple of days before hand that the meeting was going to get crashed. So they got police protection. So we all showed up. But there weren’t any poppers there. Just a shitload of cops. And all of a sudden all sorts of people were on our side. The local football hooligans. Normal slobs from Kreuzberg. And everybody went after the cops. For real, with paving stones. The cops didn’t come off too well. Finally we just ran through the Karstadt department store on the Hermannplatz with our arms spread out. Just running through the china department. Broooohaaahhhh! Fucked everything up! Everything was destroyed in about a minute. Then I ran out. There was this big trailer full of pallets there. Like a big dick with wheels. I took hold

of it and rolled it into the street for the hell of it. And just at that moment some big car comes driving by, hit the thing, and flew ten meters into the air. I went “that is so fucking cool!” And then another car came by, with a bunch of actual poppers in it. They were on the way to their fashion show and didn’t even notice that they were driving into the eye of the storm. They just sat happily in their car and listened to music. Running, I yelled “there they are” to some people I knew. And then this chic convertible was totalled within a minute. Destroyed in no time at all. Like a horde of ants attacking and just sweeping over the car.