Ulrike Meinhof under arrest.

Fuss Over Terrorist's Brain

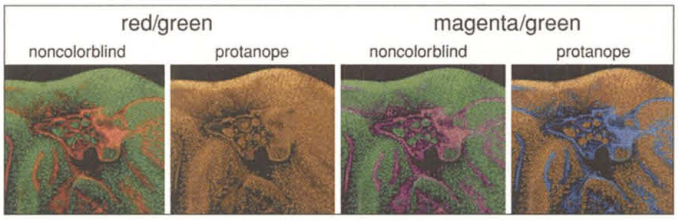
Two scientists have lent support to theories that Ulrike Meinhof, the intellectual leader of Germany's extreme-left terrorism in the 1970s, suffered from brain damage that might have contributed to her aggressive behavior. But the revelation that Bernhard Bogerts, a brain researcher at the University of Magdeburg, and Jürgen Peiffer, a neuropathologist emeritus at the University of Tübingen, were examining Meinhof's brain has kicked off a furor in Germany.

In 1962, at the age of 28, Meinhof underwent surgery for a benign brain tumor, which surgeons pinched off but did not remove. Imprisoned in 1972 for bombings and kidnappings, Meinhof hanged herself during her 1976 trial. Peiffer, who was involved in the official autopsy, claimed there was damage near the amygdala—part of the emotional brain. He preserved the brain with formalin, and for the next 2 decades it lay in a university basement in Tübingen.

In 1996, Peiffer read a study by Bogerts, who had studied the brain of a 1913 mass murderer and suggested that his behavior was related to a defect near the amygdala. He contacted Bogerts, and the two examined tissue slices "in light of new insight into the workings of the brain," says Bogerts. Some of the damage, they concluded, was from the pressure of the tumor, but most was from the surgery.

The scientists say they planned to get the cooperation of the family before publishing their findings in January, but journalists caught wind of the study first. Now officials in Stuttgart are demanding the brain back, and the fate of their paper is uncertain, as one of Meinhof's daughters, psychiatrist Regine Roehl, is suing the researchers for "disturbing the peace of the dead."

Breaking the Color Barrier



Conventional and magenta-tinged slides as seen by the colorblind.

Biologists usually use red and green stains to depict structures inside cells. But that's hard on researchers with the most common form of colorblindness; one in 12 Caucasian and one in 20 Asian males, for example, can't tell the two hues apart. Now help is on the way from a pair of colorblind Japanese scientists, who have persuaded Japan's leading molecular biology journal to start printing images the colorblind can interpret.

Kei Ito, a *Drosophila* neuroscientist at the University of Tokyo, and Masataka Okabe of the National Institute of Genetics in Mishima say that with software it's easy to convert the reds into magentas, which contain enough blue to be seen by the colorblind (see jfly.nibb.ac.jp/html/color_blind).

Months of proselytizing paid off last summer, when the editors of *Saibo Kogaku* (*Cell Technology*) agreed to make their journal "color-barrier-free." The method "opens up a whole new world that was previously hidden," says colorblind geneticist Cahir O'Kane of Cambridge University.

Some U.S. journals may follow suit, says Ito. Everyone would benefit from the changes, he notes: There's a good chance that one of the reviewers of the next paper you submit will be colorblind.

Newton Home Safe

Police in St. Petersburg have recovered a cache of valuable books—including a 313-year-old first edition of Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*—stolen from the Russian National Library last week.

The two thieves snatched the books after requesting them in the reading room on 6 November. Library Director-General Nikolay Zaytsev, who reported the theft, told *Science* he believes the heist was ordered by someone involved in the growing black market for rare books. The theft had been carefully planned: The pair had forged papers identifying themselves as researchers. But the photo IDs they were required to give the library enabled police to track them swiftly. The 29-year-old woman and her companion were apprehended with the books on a southbound train to Astrakhan.

The theft is the latest in a series of heists of scientific books from libraries and museums on the continent, including the still unsolved theft of a Copernicus book from the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg 2 years ago.

Report Ranks Technology Titans

The United States has used its scientific prowess to regain the lead in global competitiveness, according to a new report by the World Economic Forum (www.weforum.org). Each year the group polls business executives and analyzes the prospects of 80 nations based on criteria such as technology, entrepreneurial opportunities, and political and financial stability.

For the past 2 years, the United States has trailed Finland, whose telecommunications industry has been a global leader. But an expanding scientific enterprise has kept the U.S. well positioned despite the recent high-tech downturn, says Peter Cornelius, the forum's chief economist. And Japan's strong technology base has overcome a "deteriorating economic situation." Government policies are giving the United Kingdom a lift and setting Germany up for a fall, says Harvard's Michael Porter, co-chair, and sluggish spending has sent France from 20th to 30th position.

COMPETITIVENESS RANKING

2002		(2001)
1	United States	(2)
2	Finland	(1)
3	Taiwan	(7)
4	Singapore	(4)
5	Sweden	(9)
6	Switzerland	(15)
7	Australia	(5)
8	Canada	(3)
9	Norway	(6)
10	Denmark	(14)
11	United Kingdom	(12)
12	Iceland	(16)
13	Japan	(21)
14	Germany	(17)
15	Netherlands	(8)
16	New Zealand	(10)
17	Hong Kong	(13)
18	Austria	(18)
19	Israel	(24)
20	Chile	(27)

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