

Translated excerpt

**Hannah Brinkmann**  
***Gegen mein Gewissen***

avant Verlag, Berlin 2020  
ISBN 978-3-96445-040-1

pp. 77-91

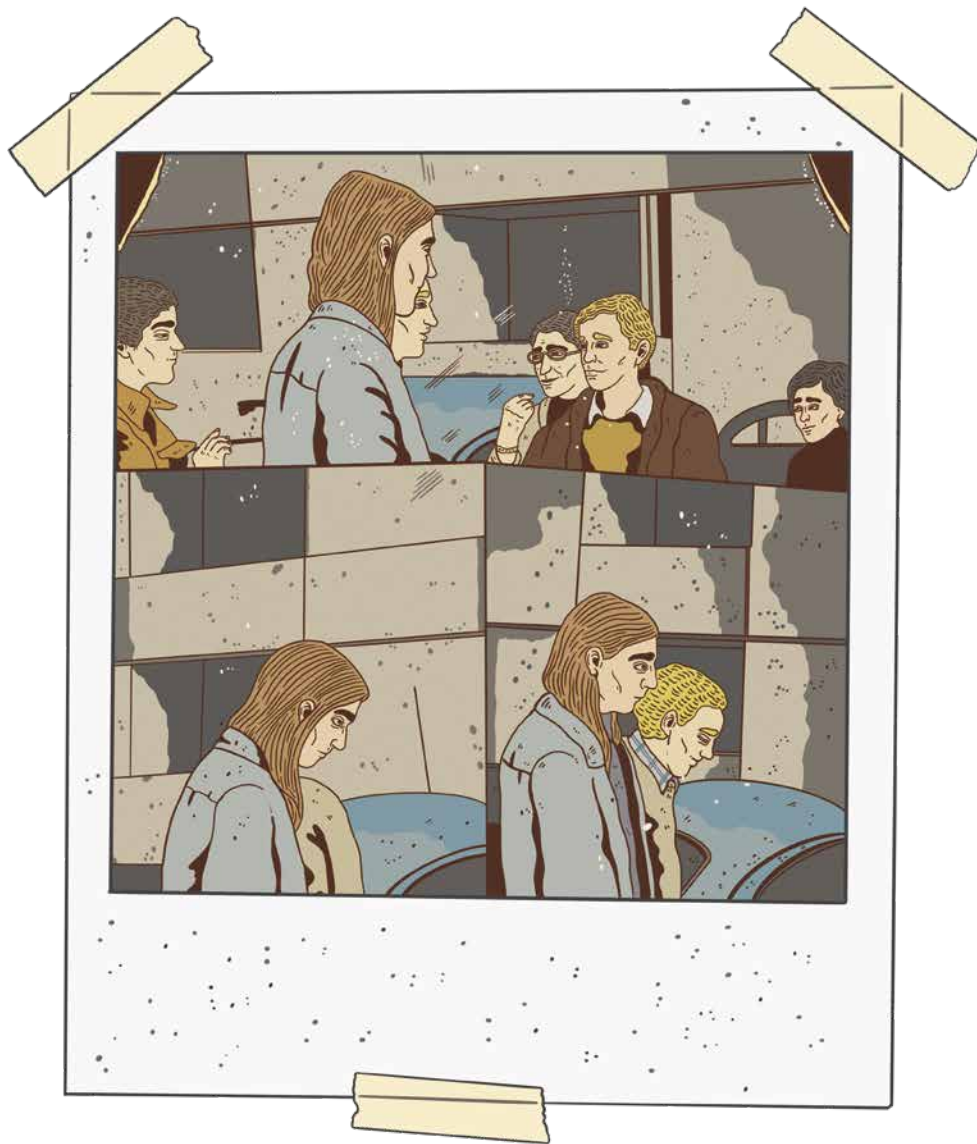
**Hannah Brinkmann**  
***Against my conscience***

Translated by John Reddick



HANNAH BRINKMANN

# AGAINST MY CONSCIENCE

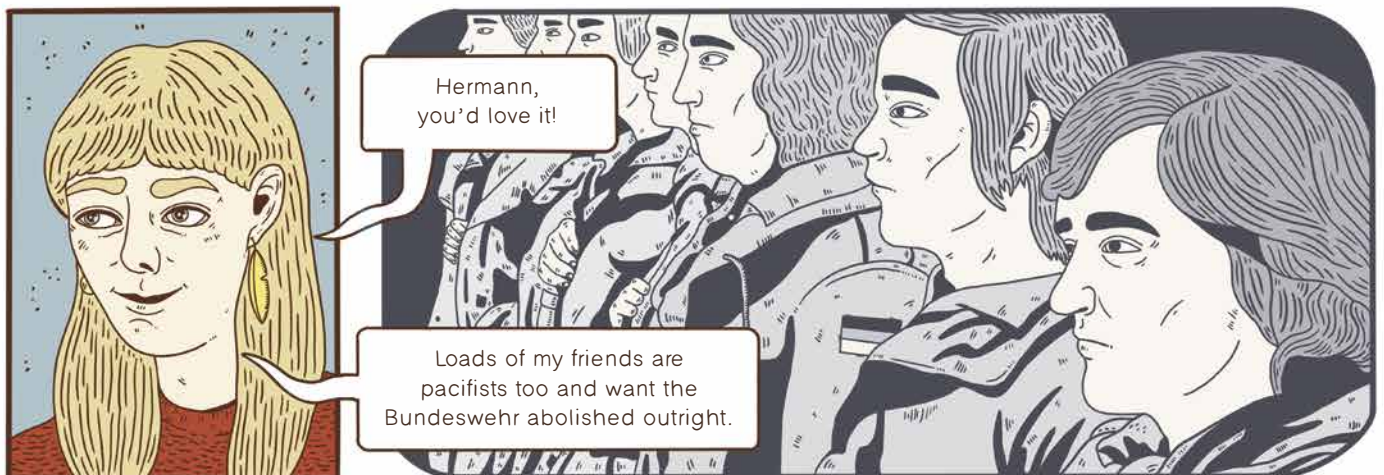


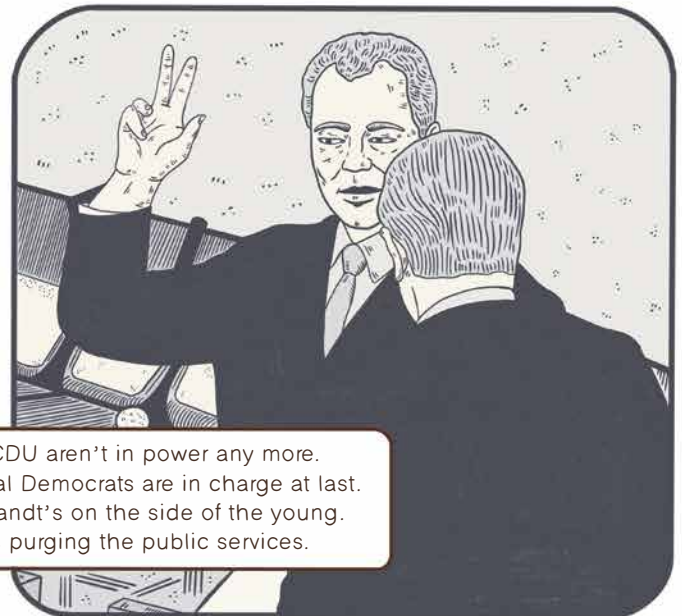
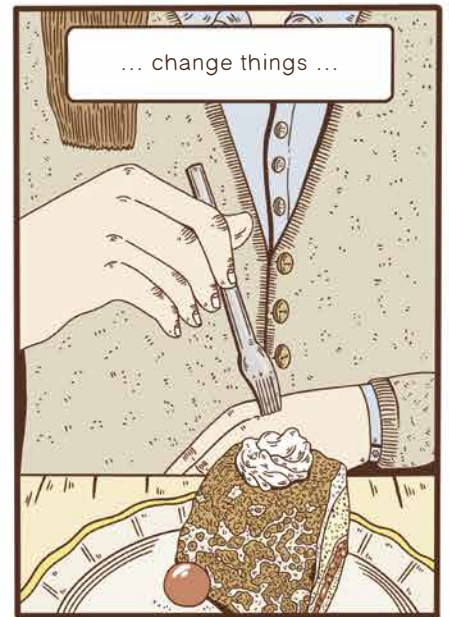
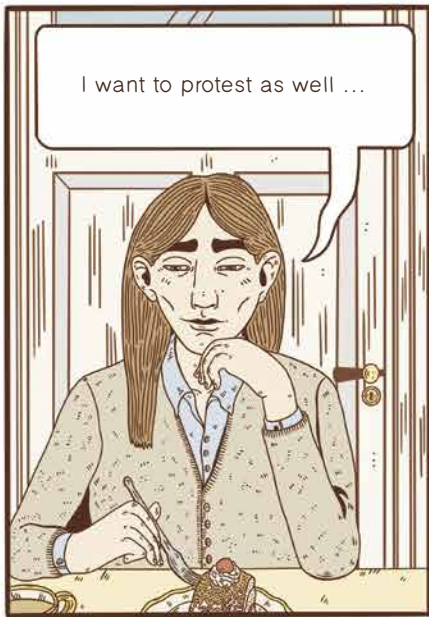
avant-verlag

© 2021 Litrix.de









7. Georg Leber

You can't always expect plaudits ...



When our Defence Minister describes the Bundeswehr as a school for the whole nation, ...



... the Springer press keeps conjuring up right-wing hate campaigns, ...



...and the Nazi judges and army officers keep their jobs and get their pensions, ...



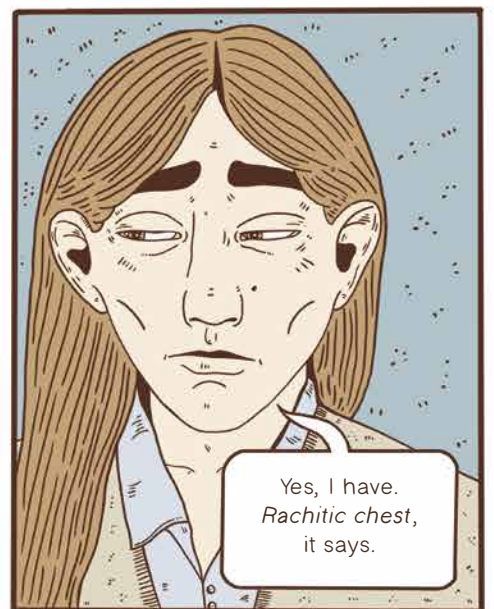
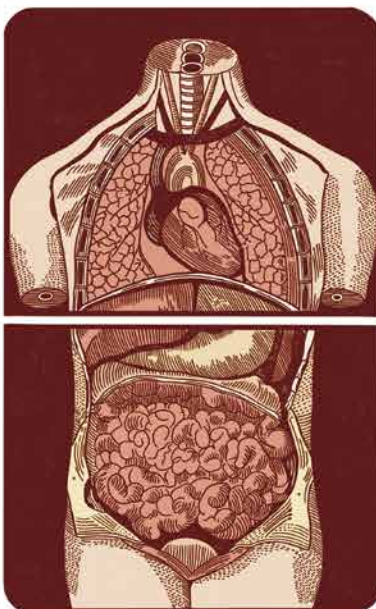
... that means *nothing's* over. Peaceful protests aren't enough any more - actions have to do the talking now.

You sound like one of those Baader-Meinhof idiots.

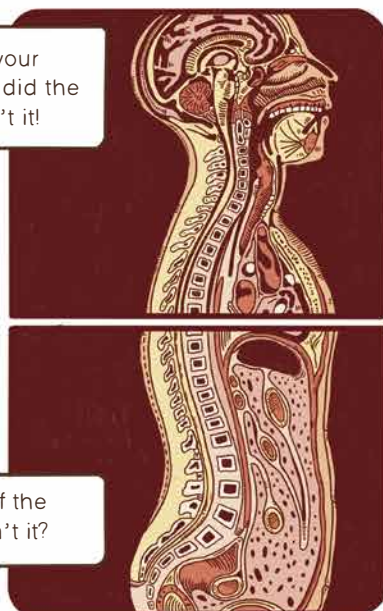
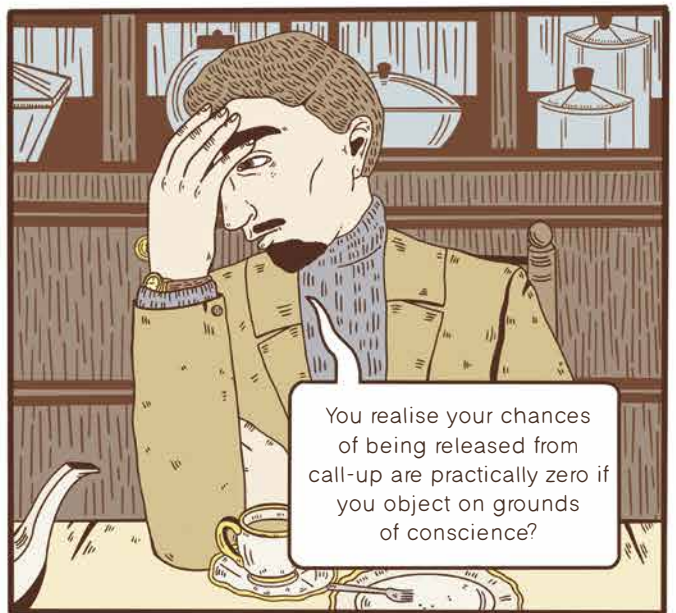


Don't listen to her, Hermann!

More to the point: have you been to Uncle Fritz to collect the doctor's note you need to submit at your army medical?



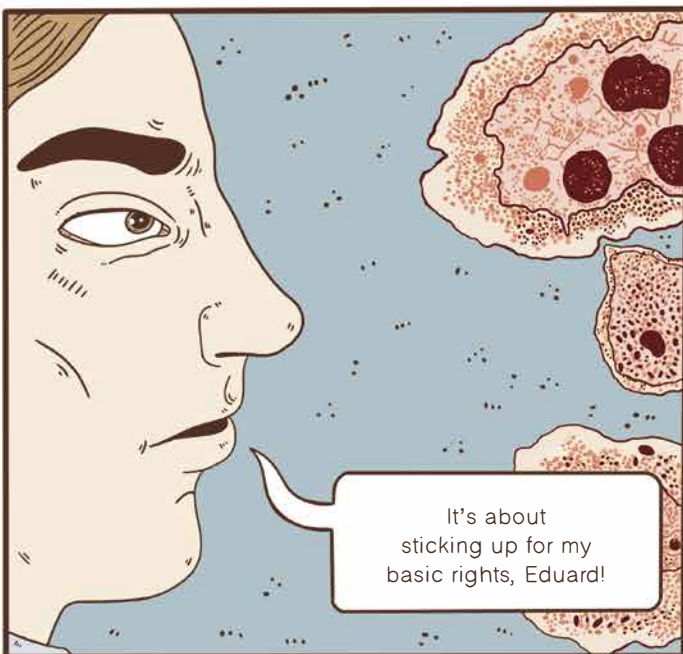
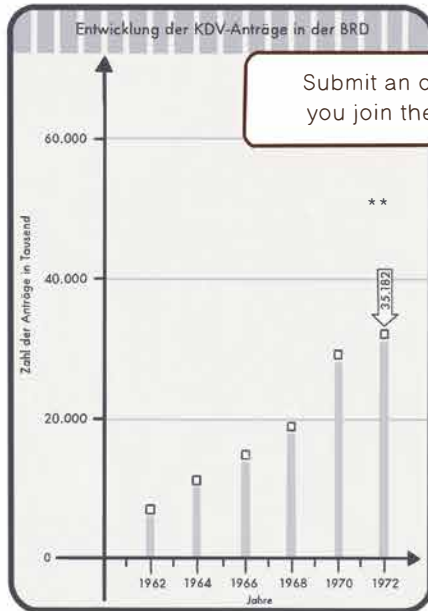
Yes, I have. *Rachitic chest*, it says.

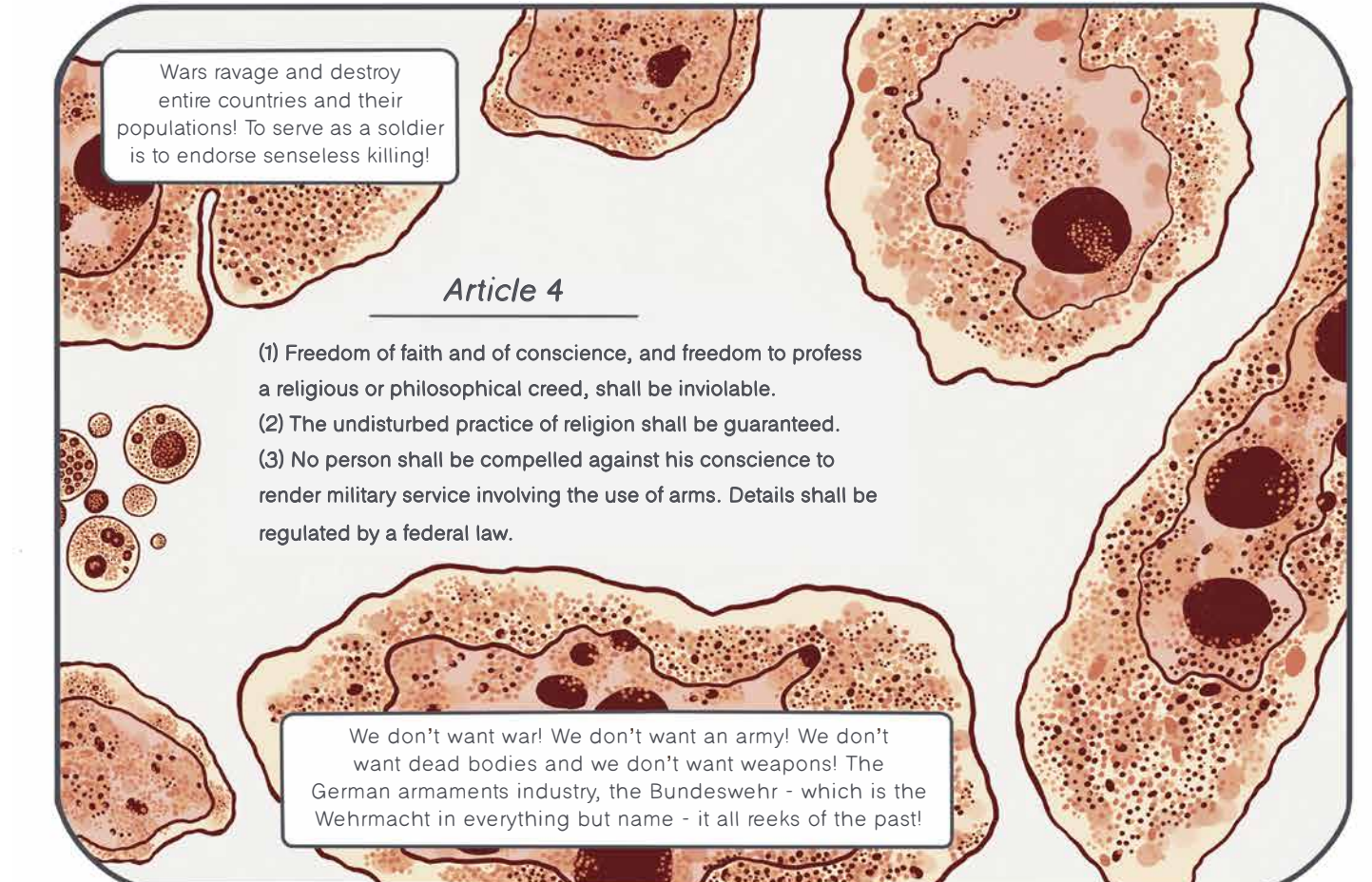


Curvature of the spine, wasn't it?









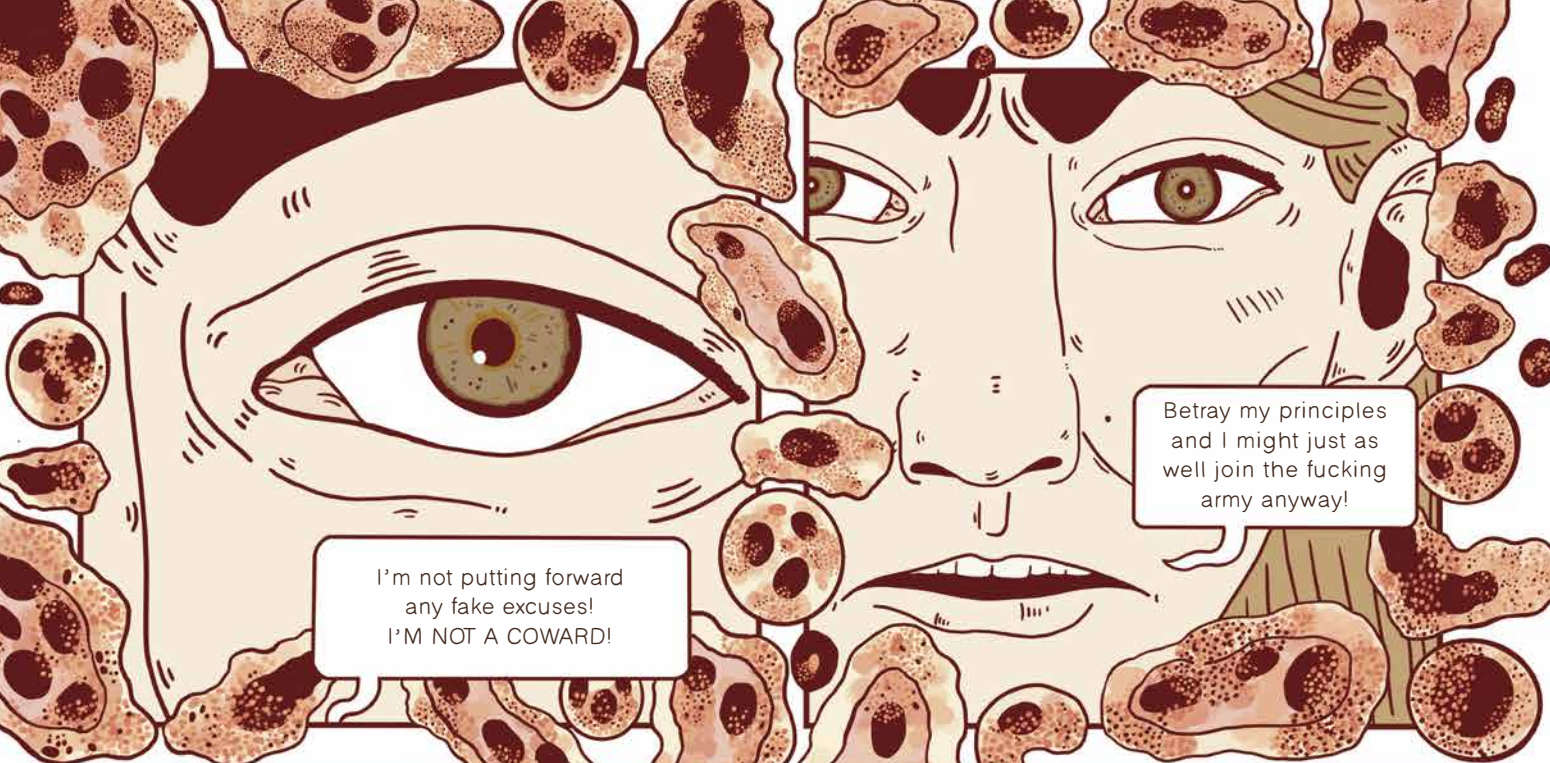
Wars ravage and destroy entire countries and their populations! To serve as a soldier is to endorse senseless killing!

### Article 4

- (1) Freedom of faith and of conscience, and freedom to profess a religious or philosophical creed, shall be inviolable.
- (2) The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed.
- (3) No person shall be compelled against his conscience to render military service involving the use of arms. Details shall be regulated by a federal law.

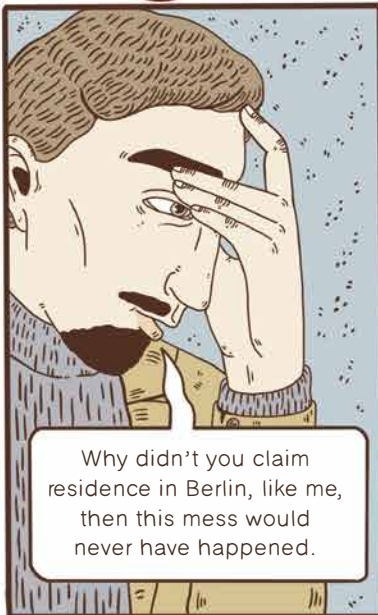
We don't want war! We don't want an army! We don't want dead bodies and we don't want weapons! The German armaments industry, the Bundeswehr - which is the Wehrmacht in everything but name - it all reeks of the past!





I'm not putting forward  
any fake excuses!  
I'M NOT A COWARD!

Betray my principles  
and I might just as  
well join the fucking  
army anyway!



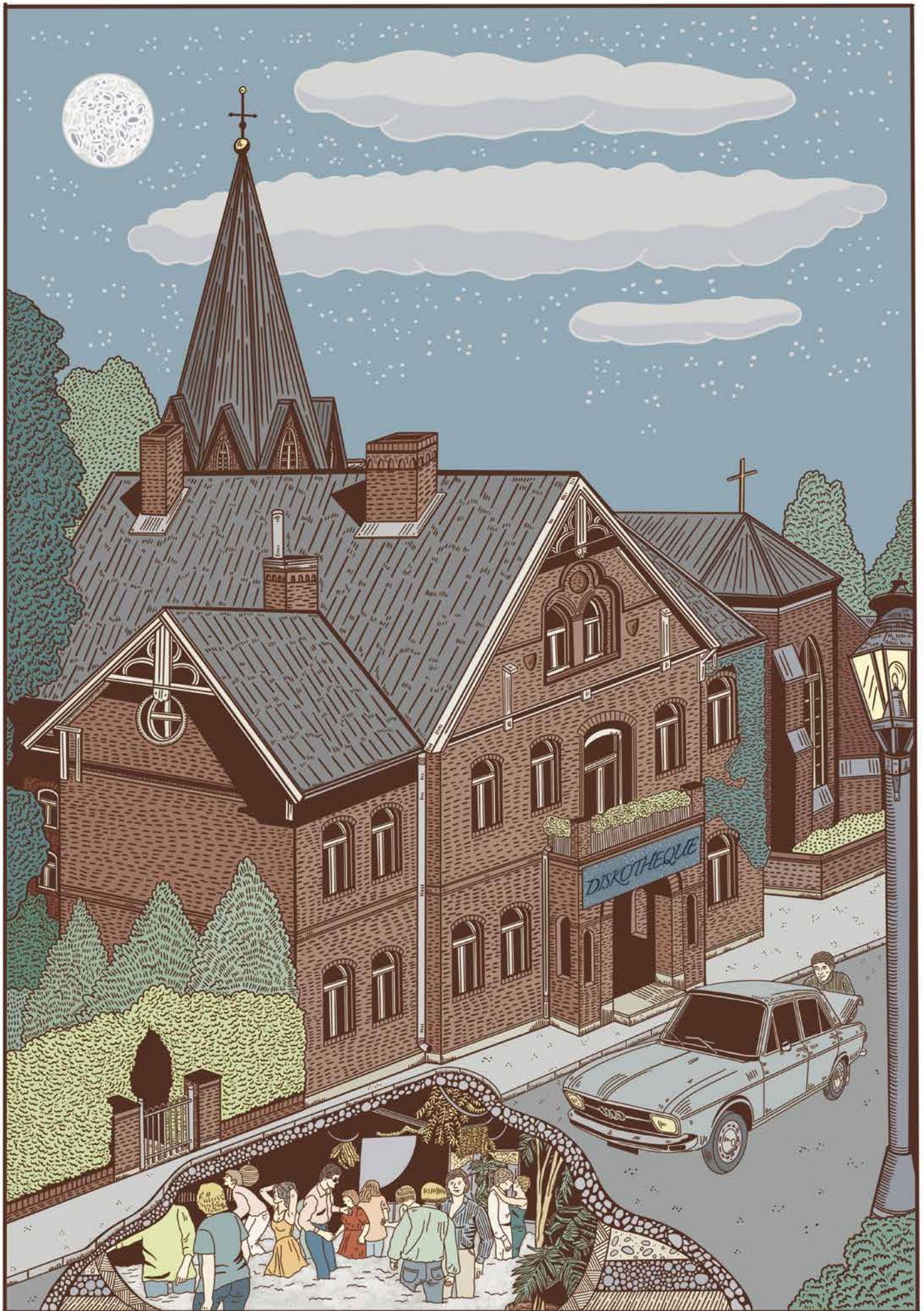
Why didn't you claim  
residence in Berlin, like me,  
then this mess would  
never have happened.



I DON'T DUCK AND WEAVE,  
EDUARD, UNLIKE YOU!



Draft 1		21.5.1972
●	<p>Application for exemption from military service on grounds of conscience as per Article 4, Paragraph 3 of the Basic Law</p>	
●	<p>As an 18-year-old I have reached that stage of development where we begin to form a coherent picture of the world and start taking responsibility for ourselves and our actions. I love the environment I inhabit, and learn from it every day. Everything I do is dependent on human beings; not only the people I live with and love, but people in general and our shared history.</p>	
	<p>killing another human being is not something I could ever justify to myself - doing so would destroy me. And weapons training is necessarily directed at just such a lethal outcome.</p>	
●	<p>If I were ever to contemplate firing a weapon at another human being, or more generally adopt the view that killing other people is right, I would be undermining the very basis of my own existence as a human being. I am as keen as anyone else to defend human freedom - but not by resorting to the very thing that destroys our freedom, namely the willingness to kill.</p>	
	<p>It can never be justified.</p>	
	<p>And there can be no justification for anything that tramples on a person's conscience.</p>	
●		
	<p>H. Brinkmann</p>	





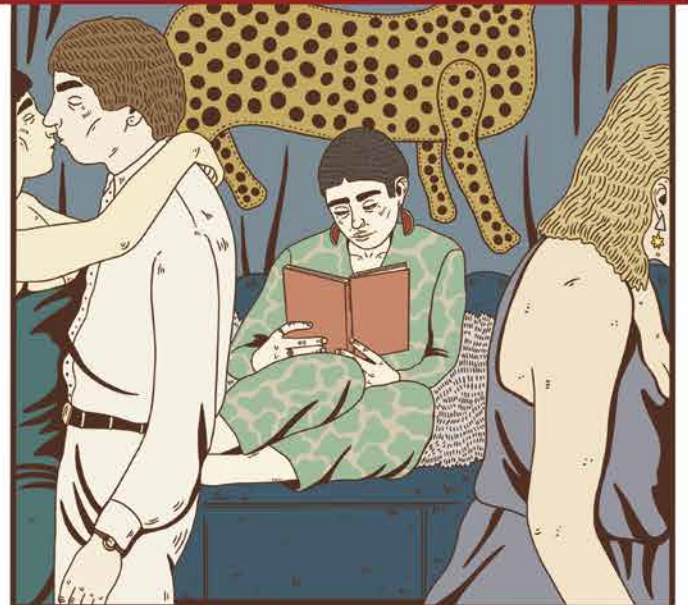


\*

ZÜGEROLLEN DOLLARS ROLLEN MASCHINEN LAUFEN  
 MENSCHEN SCHUFTEN FABRIKEN BAUEN MASCHINEN BAUEN



MOTOREN BAUEN KANONEN BAUEN FÜR WEN?  
 MACHT KAPUTT WAS EUCH KAPUTT MACHT!



\* Trains running, dollars rolling, machines whirring, people slaving, building factories, building engines, building motors, building cannons, building for who? Destroy the things destroying you!

(These lines and the corresponding ones on the following page are part of the lyrics of the iconic 1970 number *Macht kaputt was euch kaputt macht* by the rock group Ton Steine Scherben.)

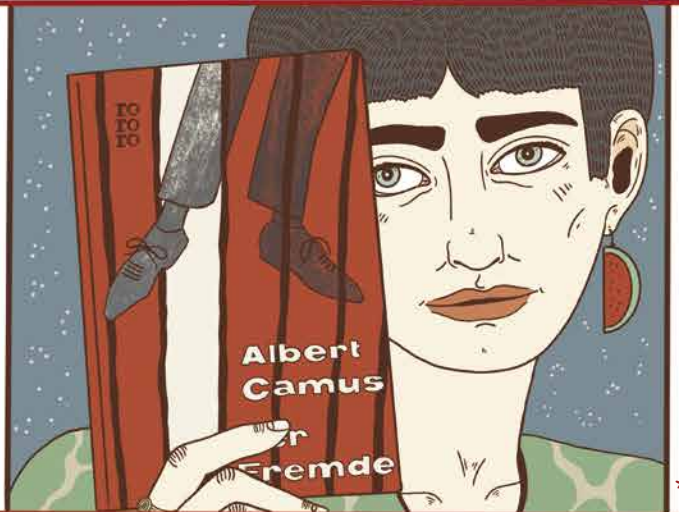


Hey, Rita, is the party really that boring? What's so thrilling that you don't want to join the fun with the rest of us?

MACHT KAPUTT WAS EUCH KAPUTT MACHT!  
 MACHT KAPUTT WAS EUCH KAPUTT MACHT!



Only a few pages to go! But if you really want to know:



\*\*

BOMBER FLIEGEN PANZER ROLLEN POLIZISTEN SCHLAGEN SOLDATEN FALLEN  
 DIE CHEFS SCHÜTZEN DIE AKTIEN SCHÜTZEN DAS RECHT SCHÜTZEN



Ah! *L'Étranger!* I couldn't put it down either!

How lovely! So you like the French existentialists as well?





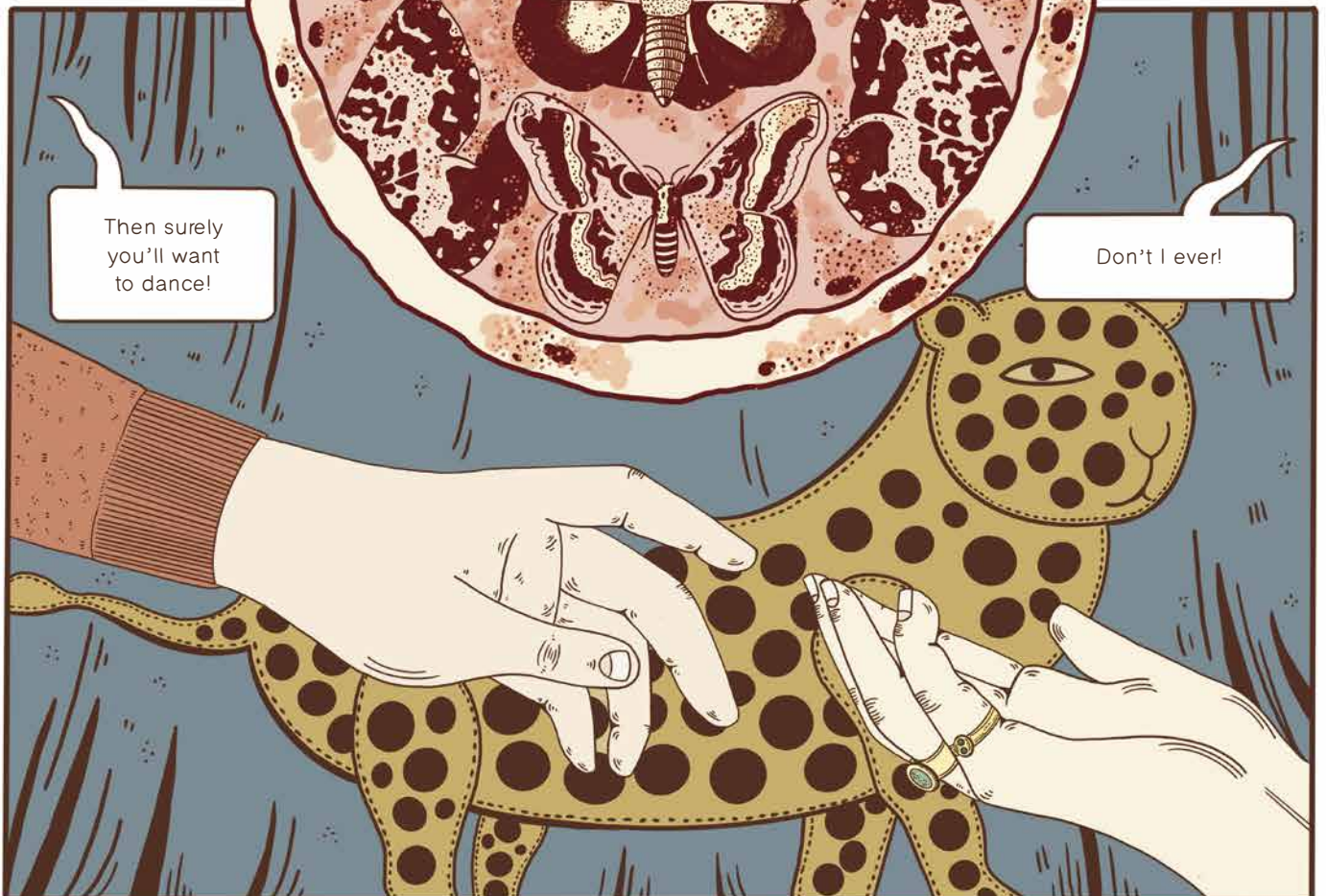
I sure do!  
"Losing one's  
life is nothing  
special ..."

"... but to see  
the meaning  
of life simply  
disappear,  
that's what's  
unbearable."



Wow, that's  
bleak! I'm  
more for this:

"The meaning  
of life consists  
in enjoying it  
to the full."



Then surely  
you'll want  
to dance!

Don't I ever!

DEGENHARDT



▶◀ SOUND SYSTEM ®