

Serve the People: The Urban Guerilla and Class Struggle

Everyone dies, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Szuma Chien said, "Though death befalls all men alike, it may be heavier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather." To die for the people is heavier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascist and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather.

Mao tse Tung

"The armed struggle is a technical issue and therefore requires technical knowledge: training, morale and last of all practice. In this area, improvisation has cost many lives and led to failed attacks. The 'spontaneity' that some people romanticize, speaking vaguely about the people's revolution and 'the masses,' is either simply a dodge or it indicates that they have decided to rely upon improvisation during a critical phase of the class struggle. Every vanguard movement must, if they want to remain true to themselves at the decisive moment in the class struggle, analyze and understand the violence of the people, so as to correctly direct it against oppression, thereby achieving the goal with the least sacrifice possible."¹

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

¹ Although not referenced as such by the RAF, this is a quote from *30 Questions to a Tupamaro* (see page 128, fn 1).

20,000 die every year because the stockholders of the automobile industry only care about profit and, therefore, don't stop to consider technical safety issues for automobiles or road construction. 5,000 people die every year at their workplace or on their way to or from it, because the owners of the means of production only consider their profits and don't care about an increase or a decline in the number of accidental deaths. 12,000 commit suicide every year, because they don't want to die in the service of capital; they'd rather just get it over with themselves. 1,000 children are murdered every year, as a result of living in low quality housing, the only purpose of which is to allow the landlord to pocket a large sum.

People treat death in the service of the exploiter as normal. The refusal to die in the service of the exploiter leads to what people think of as "unnatural deaths." The desperate actions of people, coping with the working and living conditions that capital has created, are perceived as crimes. People feel there's nothing to be done about the situation. To ensure that the incorrect perspective of the people is not replaced with a correct perspective, the Federal Minister of the Interior, the *Länder* Ministers of the Interior and the BAW have set up police death squads. Without this incorrect perspective about crime and death, the ruling class could not maintain its rule.

Petra, Georg, and Thomas died in the struggle against death at the hands of the exploiters. They were murdered so that capital could continue killing undisturbed, and so that people would continue to think that nothing can be done about the situation. But the struggle has begun!



"Murdered—The Struggle Continues": poster protesting the police killings of Petra Schelm, Thomas Weissbecker, and Georg von Rauch.

I. PERSIA AND THE CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE NEW LEFT

Brandt has flown to Tehran to visit the Shah and calm his remaining distress about the greeting he received from West German and West Berlin students during the summer of 67; to inform him that the left in the Federal Republic and in West Berlin is dead, that what remains will soon be liquidated, that the Confederation of Iranian Students¹ is effectively isolated, and about the Foreigners Act that is in the works and that will allow for their legal liquidation.

In this way Brandt has revealed the true nature of his foreign and domestic policies; they are the foreign and domestic policies of the corporations meant to control foreign and external markets and to determine who holds political power

In Tehran Brandt said, "The foreign policy of the Federal Republic must be based on its own interests and must remain free of ideological bias." The interests of the Federal Republic in Persia are the interests of the German enclave in Tehran, which is to say Siemens, AEG-Telefunken, Bayer, BASF, Hoechst, Daimler-Benz, Deutsche Bank, Mannesmann, Hochtief, Klöckner-Humboldt-Deutz, Merck, Schering, Robert Bosch, the Bayerische Vereinsbank, Thyssen, Degussa, and others. They are the ones that had the greetings to the Chancellor published in Tehran's newspapers.

The Shah also contributed a statement to the daily press celebrating the Chancellor as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, because the Shah also has no ideological biases; concerning cheap labor in Iran, concerning stable political conditions in Iran, not to mention raw materials and certain nearby markets.

Under "ideological biases," the Chancellor and the Shah subsume the interests of the German and Persian peoples regarding the relationship between their two countries. Three days before Brandt's arrival, four comrades were murdered in Tehran and Thomas Weissbecker was murdered in Augsburg. A week after Brandt's return, nine death penalties were carried out against comrades in Tehran. Meanwhile, Attorney General Martin² praised the police officers for so impressively proving their worth in the manhunts in Augsburg and Hamburg.

1 The Confederation of Iranian Students (CIS) was a Maoist student organization based in the refugee communities and active on university campuses throughout the western world.

2 Ludwig Martin, Attorney General from 1963 until 1974, when he was replaced by Siegfried Buback.

German capital in Persia is taxed at a lower rate than other capital in Persia. German development aid credit finances German projects in Persia; and the imperial arsenal in Persia is to be modernized with the help of the German military. A 22 million DM³ investment in the Persian arms industry in 1969 meant 250 million DM⁴ in follow-up orders for the German arms industry. The Shah's regime plans to use G-3s and MG-3s⁵ in the struggle against "crime" in Persia, so that in the future wages will remain low, political conditions will remain stable and the conditions of exploitation will remain favorable for German capital. Meaning that pressure for increased wages at home can be handled with threats to move production out of the country. Pressure will also be applied to the public at home, because antifascist protest against the Shah threatens the foreign policy interests of the Federal Republic of Germany.

After prostrating himself in Poland,⁶ the Chancellor now prostrates himself before the murderous Shah. The repression of the Polish, Russian, Czech, and Hungarian peoples by German fascism is no longer gong on. The repression of the Persian people under German imperialism is what is going on now. The Nuremberg Conventions are no longer in effect, but laws against Iranian students, against Greek, Turkish, and Spanish workers, who all come from countries with fascist regimes, are a current reality. German corporations profit from the fascism in these countries, controlling foreign workers here with the threat of what the fascism at home means for them. They are safe from the death penalty, which imprisoned comrades here are spared, but which is enforced in Persia, Turkey, Greece, and Spain.

The West German left met Brandt's Persian trip with silence. They left him free to babble twaddle. They let Howaida⁷ babble twaddle about how the death penalty is only used against common criminals. Given that the Shah is sensitive, given that the 2nd of June disturbed the relationship between Germany and Iran, given that the Shah's reputation is hardly stellar, as would have to be the case, given that, as

3 Roughly \$6 million.

4 Almost \$69 million.

5 The G-3 is an assault rifle and the MG-3 is a machinegun.

6 This is a reference to the so-called *Warschauer Kniefall*, the "Warsaw Genuflection," Brandt's December 1971 public atonement at the monument commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

7 Amir Abbas Howaida, Prime Minister of Iran during the rule of Shah Reza Pahlavi. He was executed in 1979 following the Islamic revolution.

everyone knows, enemies of the people dread being called enemies of the people, given that one can presume that even Brandt wasn't all that comfortable with the hypocrisy, given that German capital is predisposed to fascism, and given that it's relatively easy to demonstrate the connection between fascism in Iran and German capital in Iran... given all these things, nobody can defend the relationship without presenting themselves in a poor light.

The intellectual left came to the conclusion that only the proletarian masses can change the current situation, that only the West German masses can expropriate the profits that the corporations make from the Shah's fascism—a situation from which the Shah's fascism also profits. With this realization, the left stopped criticizing the Shah's fascism and the domination imposed by West German capitalism in the Third World. With the realization that the resistance of the West German masses against the rule of capital would not be sparked by the problems of the Third World, but only by the problems developing here, they stopped posing the problems of the Third World as a factor in politics here.

This shows both the dogmatism and the parochialism of a section of the left. The fact that the working class in West Germany and West Berlin can only think and act in the national context, while capital thinks and acts in a multinational context, is first and foremost an example of the splitting of the working class, as well as of the weakness of a left that only focuses on capital's domestic policies in its critique and ignores capital's foreign policy, thus internalizing the split in the working class. They tell the working class only half of the truth about the system, about what capitalist policy means for the working class on a daily basis and what it means for wage demands in the foreseeable future.

The contradiction facing the New Left is that their basic economic analysis and political assessment is more radical and incisive than anything produced by the West German left prior to the 66/67 recession. This left experienced the end of the postwar reconstruction phase and the strengthening of West German imperialism and understood that they had to base themselves on the extraordinary class struggle, which led to them restricting their propaganda and organizational efforts to the national context. As a result, they have an unimaginative and narrow view of what revolutionary methods of intervention are possible.

In their efforts to give a scientific orientation to the anticapitalist protest—which reaches into the schools, the unions and the SPD—to maintain and develop their position in the high schools, they used

Marxism to make the history of the working class more accessible to teachers and students. They hoped in this way to gain a foothold in the factories and schools.

Through these activities they show a willingness to act and to intervene that stands in contradiction to their actual methods of intervention, which remain those that were appropriate for the working class during the phase of competitive capitalism and parliamentarianism. They were appropriate in the period when Rosa Luxemburg, looking at the mass strikes in Russia in 1905, recognized the immense importance of strikes in the political struggle and Lenin recognized the importance of union struggles. It is the contradiction between their use of the German working class as their historical reference point, and the increasing tendency today of West German capitalism to organize itself in the form of West German imperialism.

A section of the left still sees the RAF as Baader and Meinhof's personal thing and—like Howeida, the *Bild* and the *BZ*—discusses armed struggle as if it were a form of criminal activity. In a similar vein, they also attribute our activity to faulty reasoning and misrepresent our positions. As a result, they will fail to resolve the contradiction between what they know to be the state of the class struggle, and what they perceive to be the revolutionary methods of intervention. They transform the objective problem that we all face into our subjective problem alone. They conduct themselves as if they fear the difficult task ahead of them—they bury their heads in the sand and refuse to think about it. The denunciation of the concept of the urban guerilla within a section of the left succeeds far too easily and without much thought, thereby allowing us to see the growing distance between their theory and their practice, a distance that we do not believe can be closed by our efforts alone. Their claim that they are actually involved in this debate proves, we think, that we and they have different self-perceptions.

A year ago, we said that the urban guerilla unites the national and international class struggle. The urban guerilla makes it possible for the people to become aware of the interconnectedness of imperialist rule. The urban guerilla is the revolutionary form of intervention suited to an overall position of weakness. An advance in the class struggle only occurs if legal and illegal work are connected, if political propaganda has a perspective that includes armed struggle and if political organization includes the possibility of the urban guerilla. This was made clear through the concrete example of the chemical workers strike in 1971, which showed the objective reality of the social question, the subjective

reality of the question of capitalist ownership and the militarization of the class struggle in West Germany and West Berlin.

In the current phase of history no one can any longer deny that an armed group, however small it may be, has more of a chance of becoming a people's army than a group that has been reduced to spouting revolutionary rhetoric.

*30 Questions to a Tupamaro*¹

2. THE CHEMICAL WORKERS STRIKE OF 1971

The widespread strikes in the chemical and metal industries in 1971—among the most developed industries in West Europe—made it clear what the problems facing the working class will be in the coming years. They exhibited a widespread readiness to struggle on the part of the workforce, while simultaneously showing the economic and political advantages the chemical and metal industries have vis-à-vis the working class; they showed the complicity of the union bureaucracies with the Social-Liberal government and the role of the government as the executive organ of this “corporate state.”

The workers lost the strikes. They struck for 11 and 12 percent, and the unions settled with the employers for 7.8 and 7.5 percent. The situation that socialists in the Federal Republic and West Berlin will face in coming years was certainly clarified by this strike: subjectively, an increase in readiness to struggle on the part of the working class and, objectively, the reduced capacity to struggle; objectively, a decrease in wages and the loss of “vested social rights,” subjectively, increased class antagonism and class hatred.

Economically speaking, the strength of the chemical industry was the result of the trends towards concentration and the export of capital which have been forced upon the entire West European economy by North American competition. Politically, it was the result of the lessons that West German industry drew from May 68 in France and the wildcat strikes of September 69. Their counteroffensive against the September strikes here certainly increased class consciousness.

1 The Tupamaros were a guerilla group in Uruguay at the time. This short interview started circulating as an internal document in 1967, and was first made public in a Chilean journal in mid-1968. Within a few years, it had become a text of some importance to the revolutionary edge of the New Left in the metropole.

Concentration

Due to their size and technological advantages, the large American industrialists can achieve lower production costs despite paying higher wages. Hugh Stephenson of *Time* magazine:

the problem of size is not essentially one of the size of factory installations, rather the key is understanding the grandeur of the financial and economic factors that stand behind this. A large volume of business means almost nothing. However, it does have advantageous implications regarding dominant market position. And that is an advantage that can't be achieved without substantial investment in modern industry, even if it is not in the area of developing technologies. The type of competition between industrialists in developing branches of industry, such as the automobile, chemical and oil industries, has completely changed. The cost of new investments is so high for the enterprises involved that as stable a future market as the intense competition allows for must be guaranteed. Under these circumstances, it is inevitable that European industry must in the future enter a phase of concentration into fewer and larger groups.

Die Welt, February 23, 1972

Public Funds

Concentration is the first reality. The influx of public funds to cover the costs of research and development is the second. North American industries have access to greater funds of this variety as a result of their size and the U.S.A.'s permanent war economy. In 1963-64, the U.S.A. used 3.3 percent of its gross national product for research purposes—compared to an average of 1.5 percent in West Europe. Hugh Stephenson:

In the area of developing technologies, Europe will never be able to deal with the immense and ever-growing research and development costs if a constant flow of public funds is not guaranteed.

If not, then it would be better to just sign deals with American firms right away. That is the pressure that today's economy places on the state. Concentration and state subsidies have become a question of survival for capitalist West Europe.

The Export of Capital

The third thing is the export of capital. This entails cooperation with foreign industries and building factories in foreign countries, with the aim of profiting from the cheaper raw materials and lower wages available in these countries, and of reducing transportation costs by buying from foreign markets.

Because the chemical industry stands at the forefront of this development, the chemical workers strike of 1971 had a central significance. It serves as an example of an entire trend, from the chemical companies' strike preparations in December 1970, through the purge of teachers who are members of the DKP from the public service and the incorporation of the BGS into the federal police force, from the first signs of fascism in the Federal Republic to the CSU seizing control of *Bayerischen Rundfunk*,¹ from the refusal to allow Mandel to teach at the Free University to the application of the death penalty to the Red Army Faction.

As a result of this, in the coming years increasing numbers of people from all levels of society, with the exception of the owners of capital, will find themselves dissatisfied with the structure of ownership. It therefore follows that it is tactically and strategically incorrect not to treat the question of ownership, which is now addressed with trivial and wishy washy arguments about co-management² and "protecting what we've begun," as the general and ongoing central issue. The situation has also led to a development whereby anyone who profits from these circumstances can conceal that fact.

Bayer – BASF – Farbwerke Hoechst

The chemical industry is among the industries with the highest levels of concentration in West Germany. The market share of just three, IG Farben-Nachfolger Bayer, Farbwerke Hoechst, and BASF, makes up 50 percent of the industrial sector. These three chemical corporations are among the four largest companies incorporated in the Federal Republic.

Of the 597,000 employed in the sector, 200,000 work for the big three. They control over 50 percent of the funds for research and development

1 *Bayerischen Rundfunk*: Bavarian Broadcasting, the public radio station in Bavaria.

2 The practice of union representatives having a vote on the corporate boards dates from the late 1940s. Also referred to as co-determination.

in the chemical industry. In the years 1965-70 alone, BASF gained control of business and corporate concerns that conducted 4 billion DM³ worth of business, which was more than it had itself been conducting in 1965.

Regarding the cooperation between the state and the chemical corporations, the 1969 Federal Research Report states:

In the chemical industry one can speak of a genuine division of labor between state-funded basic research and industrial research. The chemical industry can only continue their recent rate of growth and retain their international importance if a high level of (state-supported) basic research continues.

What export of capital means in the chemical industry is that while in 1970 West German industry did 19.3 percent of their business outside of Germany, for Farbwerke Hoechst it was 44 percent, for BASF 50 percent, for Bayer 56 percent. South Africa, Portugal, Turkey, Iran, and Brazil are some the places where they have production facilities.

The Federal Republic also provides military aid to Portugal, Turkey and Iran. Obviously, this military aid serves to ensure conditions of exploitation beneficial to West German capital in these countries, which is to say, holding wages down and gunning down workers who resist. It is also clear that since the mid-60s this military aid has also served to build up “security forces,” which is to say the police, who conduct the anti-guerilla war under the guise of fighting crime, saying whatever is necessary to support that position: there is no resistance, the masses are completely satisfied, it’s only a question of criminals and crime.

American military aid to Iran was given to support the campaign against drug dealing and smuggling, and Brandt has no “ideological biases” if the execution of revolutionaries is disguised as sentences carried out against criminals. Scheel spoke recently—in the context of the signing of a contract, in which the Federal Republic secured future Brazilian uranium discoveries—of the common interest of the Federal Republic and the Brazilian military junta in resisting “terrorism and subversive activities,” which is in reaction to the Latin American guerillas who laid bombs at the BASF installation.

Together with American corporations, the West German chemical corporations control almost the entire chemical and pharmaceutical market in Iran. Iran is the site of the greatest rate of expansion of

3 Roughly \$1.45 billion.

western interests; South Africa offers the highest rate of profit—Volkswagen for example averaged dividends of 30 percent last year, and in 1968 they were as high as 45 percent. Between what they produce and what they sell, the West German chemical and pharmaceutical industry controls 10 to 12 percent of the South American market.

Pressure on wages and the reduction of the wage-cost ratio in production was achieved through the exploitation of lower wage standards in foreign countries, through guest workers, and through investments at home, all of which the chemical industry has used in recent years to achieve a 75 percent increase in capacity, as well as rationalization and redundancy in the labor force.

The figures: between 1950 and 1970, the number of people employed in the chemical industry increased by only 100 percent, compared to an increase in sales of 636 percent. In general, the tendency is for the number of people to decrease. The closing of Phrixwerke made the headlines. Hüls announced this February that in 1972 the number of people it employs will decrease by 3 to 4 percent. The chemical industry speaks of the “the increasing importance of labor costs.” This indicates that they intend lay-offs and wage rollbacks. They entered the 1971 round of negotiations with the aim of asserting their concept of “labor costs,” which is to say, with the hope of putting the working class on the defensive through a massive attack.

The Strength of the Capitalist Class

Concentration as the precondition for a strong negotiating position for capital requires nothing more than a unified position on the part of the employers, in a situation where the Employers Association is controlled by the corporations that control the market: Bayer, BASF and Hoechst. Export of capital is a source of strength for the chemical industry, given that it creates a situation in which the working class that confronts it is not the industry's only source of profit. In the workers' struggle, the elimination of competition between wage workers always finds its practical limits within national borders, and so a strike only stops a part of capital's profitable production. While the workers gamble everything, capital only gambles part of what it has.

Just because the chemical industry ruthlessly uses its strengths to gain the upper hand politically is absolutely no reason for whining. It is an error to see the chemical companies as especially evil because they make use of slave labor in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to put pressure on wages, because they use investments to get the labor force

off their backs, and because they use concentration to secure economic and political mobility and flexibility. The brutality of their exploitative behavior—in the form of political repression and pressure to reduce the costs of social reproduction—indicates the effect of North American competition on West Europe’s economy, as well as the rationalization of the sector, its products, and the market. It is an integral part of the inhumanity and criminality of the system and will only be eliminated when the system is eliminated, or it will not be eliminated at all.

The chemical industry prepared meticulously for the strike; it was they and not the unions that wanted the strike, and they and not the unions that won the strike. The workers suffered a setback. Everybody played different roles against them: capital, the government and the union bureaucracy.

Preparing for the Strike

In February 71, the unions called for a wage increase beginning March 31 in Hessen, North Rhine and Rhineland Palatinate, demanding 11 to 12 percent, and for Hessen a flat 120 marks,¹ which for Hessen meant the same wage increase for all wage levels, the freezing of wage cuts and a step forward in the unity of the working class. The chemical industry refused to make any deal.

In December 70, the chemical industry had already created “mutual support systems” between their companies in case of a strike. This took the form of transferring money related to wage payments to the development and conversion of raw materials, to the production of primary and intermediate products, and to the setting aside of capital for production facilities and transportation. They also provided their customers with an 8-week stock of their products, including the smaller clients such as drugstores and universities—the rector of Düsseldorf University, for example, called upon the institutes and seminars to stock up as a precautionary measure.

Operating measures were worked out in detail: instruction manuals for strike breakers, secure plant telephone systems, a list of the names of union representatives, facilities to print leaflets, contacts with the local press and opinion-makers such as teachers, ministers and associations.

1 Roughly \$43. Regarding the flat rate: wage increases in many German industries were indexed by workers’ “skill category,” which meant that every wage increase in fact served to increase the divide between different layers of the working class. The demand for a flat wage increase was meant to counter this trend, as such an increase would benefit all workers equally. On this, see Roth, 116-117.

Lists were drawn up of supposed members of an “underground political force” to be forwarded to the *Verfassungsschutz* and the police. Contacts with the police, government departments, and Interior Ministers. A line of argument was also developed about the “danger to the workplace posed by the strike,” etc.

In December 70, the union representatives at Farbwerke Hoechst polled their members regarding the proposed wage demands. The Wage Commission—made up of representatives from the IG Chemie trade union and the larger companies—refused the demands. The vote with which the demands were rejected wasn’t even close: 4 to 1. The union representatives from Merck in Darmstadt demanded 160 marks¹ or 12 percent. They also had little luck with the Wage Commission.

State Support for the Capitalist Class

The Employers Association received state support. The basic 9 percent wage increase projected in the government’s wage guidelines was reduced to 7.5 percent at the beginning of the year. Brandt, on May 11 in parliament: “In the current phase, wage costs that are too high risk causing underemployment.” The experts in their opinions supported the chemical industry, stating that “a very slow reduction in the rate of wage increases” is not enough, but that “extreme measures are necessary.” (May 71)

In May, the chemical industry made an offer of 5 percent, and IG Chemie issued a press release stating that they wouldn’t insist upon 11 or 12 percent, but would accept 8 or 9 percent

The Betrayal of Rhineland Palatinate

On May 24, however, Rhineland Palatinate—to great public surprise—signed a wage contract for 7.8 percent over ten months, which on the basis of a real duration of twelve months is 6.5 percent, less than that suggested in Schiller’s² reference data. Rhineland Palatinate is controlled by BASF. BASF won’t accept strikes.

Bayer and Hoechst also later avoided strikes. The employees of the large companies don’t want the humiliation of a setback during a strike; they have been disciplined by a broad and diverse system of pacification:

1 Roughly \$58.

2 Karl Schiller was the SPD’s Federal Minister of Economic Affairs and Minister of Finance at the time. His reference data would presumably have determined the government’s wage guidelines.

company housing, purported profit sharing, training grants, a body of company representatives alongside the unions, the organization of the workplace whereby the employees are split into hundreds of separate factory units, a wage system split into different wage levels, separate low wage groups for men and women.

The chemical industry in Hessen circulated to its own employees the leaflet that the IG Chemie trade union had prepared for its members regarding this outcome. The Wage Commission in North Rhine and Hessen bristled at the outcome in Rhineland Palatinate. They talked about options for struggle, but didn't prepare them. IG Chemie simply demanded that their members get their dues in order and recruit new members.

The Strike

In the face of the chemical industry's resistance, federal government arbitration eventually failed in North Rhine and Hessen, and later in Westphalia and Hamburg. Following the failure of federal government arbitration, the strike began. From the beginning of June until the beginning of July, a total of 50,000 workers in these four areas were on strike and 150,000 were involved in support actions. In North Rhine they struck for 9 percent, in Hessen for a flat increase of at least 120 marks,³ or 11 percent, and in the other areas for 11 or 12 percent. It was the first strike in the chemical industry in 40 years, since the wage struggles at the beginning and end of the 1920s.

The organizational initiative didn't come from the unions; it came from the workers. At Glanzstoff in Oberbruch, it started with 120 skilled workers, who spontaneously walked out on June 3. Later, when the union called for a work stoppage in the key sectors, other workers spontaneously joined the strike. At Dynamit Nobel in Troisdorf, the action began with a spontaneous walkout on the part of skilled workers in the explosives factories. At Clouth-Gummiwerken in Cologne, where the strike lasted 4 weeks, it began with the mill workers. At Degussa in Wolfgang, small groups of skilled workers walked out of the various production centres, calling for a demonstration against the factory committee and the union representatives. At Braun in Melsungen, it began with workers in the engineering building. In Glanzstoff in Kelsterbach, the action began with a sit-down strike by some Spanish workers. In Merck, at Farbwerken Hoechst, the action began with

³ Roughly \$43.

different small groups. In some factories the strike lasted for the entire month of June.

On June 8, 10,000 workers took part in a mass IG Chemie trade union demonstration at the Cologne Arena. On June 14, there was a day of action in North Rhine; 19,000 workers from 38 factories joined the strike. On June 16, 10,000 workers again participated in a second mass IG Chemie demonstration in Cologne. Simultaneously, 16,000 took part in actions in Hessen—4,000 workers from Farbwerke Hoechst participated in a union demonstration; it was the first time in 50 years that there was a strike at Hoechst—even if it only lasted a few hours. At the end of June, 38,000 workers were on strike in Hessen, North Rhine, Hamburg and Westphalia. If one considers the dubious behavior of the union bureaucracy, and the fact that the strike initiative came from small groups, these are impressive numbers.

At Merck, the employees were pressured by the chairman of the factory committee to back the union's demands. The strike motion put forward by strike leaders at Bayer in Leverkusen wasn't accepted by the regional strike headquarters. Many didn't want to strike, because they felt not enough was being demanded. Many didn't want to strike, because they feared it would end in a rotten compromise. That activities were restricted to isolated actions at Farbwerken Hoechst and at Bayer in Leverkusen—the largest factories in Hessen and North Rhine—demoralized many people. The corporations' system of pacification paid off.

During the strike, the chemical industry took every possible step to remain on the offensive—and to keep the unions on the defensive. Pressure was kept on the workers by claims that the strike was illegal because no strike vote had been held—at IG Chemie, a strike vote is not required, as is also the case at IG Metall. At Hoechst, the argument that there could be “no strike without a strike vote” prevented the strike. The strike leadership at Merck treated the issue of rights as an issue of power in the class struggle: “In the workers' struggle, and everything is in the wording, we are governed first and foremost by the opinion of the majority, or more specifically the strikers.” IG Chemie can only conceive of things in terms of their own bylaws.

The chemical industry made equal use of legal and illegal methods; Merck spread rumors about injuries; they claimed that stones had been placed on the tracks of the factories' rail system, that “anticorporate elements” had engaged in sabotage and that strike centres were defended with bicycle chains and brass knuckles. At Glanzstoff in Oberbruch,

rumors were spread about shootings. Police units ensured that strike breakers could gain access to the factories at Merck and Glanzstoff. The *Kripo* photographed and attacked strike centres. Buses carrying strike breakers drove into strike centres (Glanzstoff). Company management at Merck disrupted radio communication between strike centres and increased plant security. Riot police stood at the ready. Outside workers were brought in as strike breakers. An encampment was forced off the factory premises. At Glanzstoff, the police units were so vicious that young police officers were crying and older ones had to be replaced before the police could clear a path for the strike breakers.

Class Justice

An injunction issued by the Labor Court ensured strike breakers access to the factories, sanctioned the use of police units, and criminalized strike actions. In Merck, following this injunction, IG Chemie accepted a settlement, the contents of which did not respect the work stoppage—the entry for strike breakers—and held that if anything the injunction sanctioned the unions. As a result, union strike leaders of Merck in Rükken said regarding the injunction, “The eyes of the law look out from the face of the ruling class.” (Ernst Bloch)¹ “We accuse society’s leaders of violence; the violence begins and ends with society’s leaders.” Regarding the injunction, they said, “The injunction makes a mockery of the right to work, using it to permit strike breakers. But the employers refuse to protect the real right to work. Where was the right to work during the crisis of 1966-67?”

The mayor of Darmstadt followed a declaration of state and police neutrality with the threat that surely no one wanted a vacation in the hospital.

The workers at Merck, resisting the police, sometimes with the support of students, continued to block the entry of strike breakers. The fact that they conducted their strike aggressively indicates that the workers had no doubts about the legitimacy of their actions. In response to this, 17 apprentices and young workers from Merck were illegally terminated after the strike ended.

As the unions gradually scaled back their demands, and while the workers were still striking, the chemical industry announced without

¹ Ernst Bloch was an important 20th century German Marxist theorist and art critic who counted the much younger Rudi Dutschke among his friends and intellectual peers.

further ado that, as of June 1, wages would be increased by 6.5 percent. Corruption proceedings launched by the workers were an overall failure. The workers were no match for the machinations of the union leadership. The latter released a Communiqué on Concerted Action in what amounted to a call for the workers to accept defeat and end the strike: “The language of the Common Concerted Action was completely the work of the employers and the unions, to make sure that not everyone will benefit from the anticipated rise in prices and incomes being created by the boom, but rather that everyone will be subjected to the dictates of a phase of macroeconomic consolidation.”

At the beginning of July, the Board of Directors of IG Chemie reached an agreement with the chemical industry: 7.8 percent = wage guidelines = the outcome at Rhineland Palitinate. The Merck strike leadership sent a protest telegram to the board requesting that the decision be rescinded. At Clouth-Gummiwerken, the union traitors were shouted down when the outcome was announced. The strike was over.

The chemical industry had achieved its goal. They wanted the first strike in the chemical industry, the first strike by chemical workers of this generation, to end in defeat, because “given the increasing importance of labor costs, they must consider the possibility that in future wage negotiations in the chemical industry, serious confrontations, possibly even labor disputes, may prove unavoidable” [from: *Hilfeleistung im Arbeitskampf*¹]¹—because for the chemical industry this strike was not an isolated incident, but rather one step in a long term strategy of struggle against the working class. In the words of the Deutsche Bank’s spokesman, Ulrich, “It requires many steps, each of which must be large enough to reach the goal—rates of increase of only two or three percent.” (February 72)

The workers didn’t achieve what they hoped for: more unity—that was the objective of the 120 mark demand in Hessen; wage increases that do not lag behind price increases—that was the objective of the entire strike movement; close relations—unity and not separation between the workers from Bayer, BASF, and Hoechst; success.

This wage agreement is an expression of the actual power relations between the classes. One could say that capital has almost all of it and the workers almost none: capital has closed ranks and “concentrated,” while the working class suffers from numerous divisions; capital has powerful organizations that are firmly in control, while the workers

1 Support During Labor Disputes.

have unions that are out of their control, with a bureaucracy and a leadership that, like the current government, advance anti-worker policies; capital has the state, and the state is against the working class; capital is organized internationally, while the working class is still only able to organize in the national context; capital has a clear, long term strategy and uses propaganda to promote it at every opportunity, with the goal of attacking the working class; the workers can counter this only with their rage—that is all they have.

The Militarization of the Class Struggle

In spite of capital's strength and the weakness of the working class, the state is arming itself and preparing for the militarization of the class struggle. The political means correspond with the economic facts: capital's aggression. The political facts signal the extent and the strength of the attack.

The less the common good—which is to say general affluence, increasing income, and improved living conditions for all—is addressed by capitalist policy, the more it must be promoted, so as to reduce possibilities for criticizing the methods employed by capital. Therefore, critical journalists have been fired everywhere; therefore the schools have been cleared of leftists; therefore, the CSU has seized control of the *Bayerischen Rundfunk*, which can only signal the beginning of the acquisition of ARD stations by the ZDF²—even if the process can't proceed as quickly in other *Länder*.

To the extent that the system can no longer purchase the loyalty of the masses, they must be coerced. As it will no longer be given willingly, it will be gained through threats of violence; the BGS will be transformed into a federal police force and increased from a force of 23,000 to a force of 30,000; the police will be armed with submachine guns, and the citizenry should become as accustomed to seeing submachine gun-armed police on street corners as they are of paying taxes;³ penal law will be stiffened; emergency exercises will be conducted using

2 The ARD is the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Consortium of Public-Law Broadcasting Institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany); *Bayerischen Rundfunk* is a member of the ARD. ZDF is the *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (Second German Television), owned by Deutsche Telekom; it is commercial TV, partially funded through advertising.

3 This is a reference to a statement by Willy Weyer, Interior Minister of North-Rhine-Westphalia, who stated that "Citizens must get as used precisely to the sight of policemen with machine pistols as they are to paying tax." (Cobler, 141).

sharpshooters; comrades will be taken into preventive custody; RAF suspects will be subject to the death penalty.

To the extent that people have no further reason, once capitalism is finally enforced in West Germany, to continue being anticommunist, communists must be forcibly separated from the people. Therefore, the left is being pushed out of the factories. Therefore the price the DKP must pay to remain legal will get higher and higher (and it is apparent that they'll pay any price). Therefore, the chemical industry threatens the Free University; they will not hire Free University graduates if peace and order are not re-established at the Free University.

To the degree that the ideas of the communist alternative win ground as a result of the system's own contradictions, the liberated spaces from which such ideas can be propagated must be closed; therefore Mandel should not be permitted to teach at the Free University; therefore the president of the university in Frankfurt calls in the police to make sure that exams supported by industry are written; therefore Löwenthal¹ rants about the Spartacus Youth,² and Löwenthal's cameramen attack students to get photos of as many violent scenes that can be used to incite the people as possible.

After ten years of employing foreigners in the Federal Republic—since the wall in 1961³—the accident rate of foreigners has reached a level double that of German workers, which is already high enough, and they still live in ghettos and discrimination is still prevalent in the factories and neighborhoods. As foreign workers have now begun to organize to better protect themselves, the Basic Law is to be changed to make it easier to monitor foreigners' organizations, so as to make it easier to dismantle them, something that is already possible with the fascist laws governing foreigners and the anticommunist law governing association.

Capitalist propagandists use the narrow opportunity that the Red Army Faction affords them to argue that their core problem, the escalation of the class struggle, is caused by us, and that the rise of right-

1 Gerhard Löwenthal was a German journalist and a ZDF news anchor from 1969 until 1988.

2 "Spartacus Youth": the DKP's student section, by far the largest self-styled communist organization active on campuses during this period.

3 The construction of the Berlin Wall cut off the flow of refugees from the East that had been providing a reservoir of cheap labor up until that time. This signaled the beginning of a guest worker policy of recruiting cheap labor from southern Europe, Turkey, and elsewhere.

wing radicalism is a response to us. This is objectively the argument of the class enemy and subjectively an entirely shallow approach based on nothing more than the superficial assessment of the issues found in the bourgeois press.

The Legal Left and Public Enemy No. 1

In the face of capital's offensive, the legal left is not just on the defensive, it is objectively helpless. They respond with their leaflets and their newspapers and their agitation among the workers, in which they say all the blame lies with capital, which is true, that the workers must organize themselves, that the social democratic line must be overcome in the factories, that the workers must learn to conduct economic struggles so as to regain their class consciousness—all of which is important work. But proposing it as the only form of political work it is shortsighted.

They see semi-automatic pistols and say, "Organize the economic struggle." They see the emergency exercises and say, "Class consciousness." They see fascism and say, "Don't bring the class struggle to a head." They see war preparations and say, "Develop a policy of unity with the middle class." They see Labor Court and Federal Labor Court decisions that will ban future strikes and say, "Legality."

The counterrevolution believes that it is possible to get rid of all of the problems that it itself produces, and no means is too dirty in achieving that goal. But they can't wait until fascism has really been established and the masses have been mobilized in their service. They need the security offered by a monopoly of weapons and armed violence—so that the rage of the working class, which they did so much to provoke, does not lead the working class to the idea, and with the idea, the means: the idea of the revolutionary guerilla's armed struggle, striking from the shadows and not easily caught, imposing accountability, demoralizing the police, and resisting their violence with counterviolence.

Genscher would not be the Minister of the Interior of the ruling class if he were not prepared to use unimaginable measures to take us "out of circulation," if he hadn't declared us Public Enemy No. 1 even before we did anything, if he hadn't indicated that he was prepared to do anything, to engage in any action, to isolate us from the left, the labor force and the people, if he wasn't prepared to murder us. This situation will surely get worse.

But they can no longer continue their war preparations covertly, and they cannot continue to act within their own legal parameters. They are obliged to violate their own system, and in so doing they show their true

colors as enemies of the people—and the left creates accurate propaganda at a high dialectical level, as ought to be the case, when they say: this terror is not directed against the RAF, but rather against the working class. Obviously its target isn't the RAF, but rather the development of the coming class struggle. This is why the idea of armed struggle is met with all the violence the system is currently capable of, in order to prevent the working class from embracing it.

We're not feeling edgy; the system is feeling nervous.

Capital can't wait until it has established fascism because American competition won't wait. The hysteria of the system doesn't make our strategy or tactics incorrect. And the system is not incorrect in making it incredibly difficult for us to anchor the guerilla in the masses. Knowing this, it is not incorrect to develop resistance, given that the war will be a protracted war.

What could comrades be waiting for in a country that allowed Auschwitz to occur without resistance? Doesn't the current workers' movement bring with it the history of the German workers' movement and this police force the history of the SS?

Communists struggle for the satisfaction of the goals and interests of the working class immediately at hand, but they also show the way forward for the movement as well as its future.

Communist Manifesto

That is what we mean by SERVE THE PEOPLE.

3. THE QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP AND THE MILITARIZATION OF THE CONFLICT

The argument that the Federal Republic is not Latin America obscures local conditions more than it clarifies them. This is indicated by (and the debate is liberally seasoned with these): "The same horrifying poverty doesn't exist here as does there"; "Here the enemy is not a foreign power"; "Here the state is not so hated by the people"; "We are not ruled by a military dictatorship here as is the case in many Latin American countries."

Meaning: conditions there are so intolerable that violence is the only option—here things are still good enough that the conditions are not ripe for violence.

In the Rowohlt¹ volume *Zerschlagt die Wohlstandsinself der iii. Welt*,² which includes Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla*, it says in the preface that the decision to publish his text is a protest against arrests and torture in Brazil, not a guide for action here, "however weak parliamentary democracy may be and whatever threat is posed by its own economic system."—"To use counterviolence (the Latin American urban guerilla model) which is meant to be used against a terrorist capitalist ruling class, in a country where one can discuss workers' participation, is to make a mockery of the wretched of the earth."

Following this logic, to bomb BASF in Ludwigshafen would be to mock the people who bombed BASF in Brazil. The Latin American comrades feel differently. BASF does as well.

The argument that the Federal Republic is not Latin America is advanced by people who speak about current affairs from a perspective in which their monthly income is secure, and who speak in a way which keeps it secure; it is an example of human coldness and intellectual arrogance in the face of the problems of people here. Reality in the Federal Republic is in this way factually and analytically removed from the table. An analysis of questions here must be based on the objective relevance of social questions, on the subjective relevance of the question of ownership, and on the militarization of the class struggle.

Poverty in the Federal Republic

The objective relevance of social questions means the reality of poverty in the Federal Republic. The fact that this poverty is largely hidden doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. The fact that there is no chance that this poverty will lead to social revolution is no reason to act as if it doesn't exist.

Jürgen Roth,³ in his book *Armut in der Bundesrepublik*⁴ has assembled almost everything that needs to be said on this topic. 14 million people in the Federal Republic and West Berlin are living in poverty today. 1.1 million people living in rural areas must get by on 100 to 400 marks⁵ per month; these are the families of small farmers and people retired from sharecropping. 4.66 million households with

1 A prominent German publishing company.

2 Destroy the Islands of Wealth in the Third World.

3 Jürgen Roth is a German investigative journalist.

4 Poverty in the Federal Republic.

5 Roughly \$35 to \$140.

an average of three members must get by on a monthly net income of less than 600 marks;¹ that is 21 percent of all households. Over 5 million pensioners have a monthly pension of around 350 marks.² To this add 600,000 people in low-income housing projects, 450,000 in homeless shelters, 100,000 institutionalized children, 100,000 in mental asylums, 50,000 adults in prison and 50,000 youth in reform schools. Those are the official figures. Everyone knows that official figures in this area are always underestimates. In Bremen, 11,000 people receive heating subsidies because they can't afford to buy coal. The Munich Housing Bureau calculates that the number of homeless will increase from 7,300 to 25,000. In Cologne, in 1963, 17,000 lived in low-income housing projects.

In the Nordweststadt neighborhood in Frankfurt one pays 460 marks³ rent for two rooms totaling about 60 square metres. In Nordweststadt the electricity metres are found in the basement. In almost every high-rise at least one electricity metre is turned off, regardless of whether there are small children in the apartment and regardless of whether it is winter. The city of Frankfurt turns off the electricity to 50 homes every day; approximately 800 families a month have their electricity cut.

Approximately 5,000 vagrants live in Frankfurt. At night, water is used to drive them from the area where they sleep on the B level of the Hauptwache pedestrian mall. When the police leave, they come back, lie newspapers on the wet ground, and go back to sleep.

7 million homes in the Federal Republic have neither a bath nor a toilet. 800,000 families live in barracks. In Frankfurt, 20,000 people are searching for homes. In Düsseldorf, it's 30,000.

600,000 people in the Federal Republic suffer from schizophrenia. If schizophrenia is not treated it is debilitating. 3 percent of the population is unable to work or pursue a career. 5 to 6 million people require some form of psychological support. Some psychiatric institutions have only 0.75 square metres of space per patient.

High school teachers estimate that 80 percent of working class children do not attend classes.

Poverty in the Federal Republic is not decreasing; it is increasing. Demand for housing is increasing. The need for schools is increasing. Child abuse is increasing. At the end of 1970, 7,000 cases were reported;

1 Roughly \$220.

2 Roughly \$127.

3 Roughly \$167.

it is estimated that in reality there were 100,000. It is also estimated that 1,000 children are beaten to death each year.

“To describe the school system in the Federal Republic is to describe poverty in a rich country,” says Luc Jochimsen⁴ in her book *Hinterhöfe der Nation*,⁵ which provides the necessary details:

The public education system is a slum with the characteristics of any slum: deprivation, budget shortfalls, shortages, obsolescence, crowding, disrepair, discontent, resignation, indifference, and ruthlessness.

What occurs today with six- and seven-year-olds in the primary schools of the Federal Republic reflects a conscious plan to use compulsory education to later deny these children the right to education and training. It is a crime against education. A crime for which no punishment exists. A crime that will never face prosecution.

In 1970, 35,000 people lived in the Märkisch neighborhood in Berlin. It is projected to reach 140,000 by 1980. The people are saying, “It’s brutal here, totally squalid; in any event, it destroys the will to live—but inside the houses are well laid out.” Everything is available in the Märkisch neighborhood: playgrounds, a transportation system, schools, cheap shopping, doctors and lawyers; and they are cesspools for poverty, child abuse, suicide, criminal gangs, bitterness and need. The Märkisch neighborhood shows the future of social conditions.

(Bourgeois authors, faced with the conclusions we are drawing here, make no effort to place their observations within a context which recognizes that poverty is caused by the mobility of capital and the concentration of capital by banks, insurance companies, and home and property owners. They come to terms with the research data through verbal protests.)

The reality of poverty is not the same thing as revolutionary reality. The poor are not spontaneously and of their own accord revolutionary. They generally direct their aggression against themselves rather than against their oppressors. The objects of their aggression are usually other poor people, not those who benefit from their poverty. Not the real estate companies, the banks, the insurance companies, the

4 Lukrezia Jochimsen was a sociologist and TV journalist. Today she is a member of parliament for the left-wing *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* (PDS).

5 Backyards of the Nation.

corporations and the city planners, but rather other victims. Inactive, truly depressed, a discouraging example providing material for the fascism of *Bild* and ZDF.

The ZDF showed the following scene: in the slums of Wiesbaden, ZDF had children play in the dirt, beating on each other and screaming. The adults had to scream at them to let each other be. The television voice-over says, “The Federal Republic is not Latin America”; the poor in the Federal Republic have only themselves to blame; they are criminals; there are very few poor people—this is the concrete evidence. The Springer Press prints stuff like this. The material of fascism.

The Reality of Ownership Conditions

But the objective reality of poverty has in no small way clarified the subjective fact that capitalist ownership since the early postwar years—the CDU’s Ahlener Program¹—has provided nothing. No gains came spontaneously, all were won through negotiations. Little was developed for the poor, but in the rest of society Citizens Initiatives with their platitudes became more widespread, albeit very poorly organized and vague, not worth repressing.

The 20,000 sacrificed in car accidents to the automobile industry’s lust for profit has not led to any consideration of the future of the highway system; the insurance aristocracy that represents capital guarantees illness, the downside of which being miserable hospital stays; the contradiction between community debt and the dividends enjoyed by the corporations that engage in production on their territory; between the exploitation of guest workers and the accommodations provided to guest workers; between the misery of children and the profits of toy companies; between profit made by landlords and miserable housing conditions—all of this is common knowledge. It is covered at length in *Spiegel* every week, and daily in *Bild*, in most cases as isolated incidents. But this state of affairs has been worsening so quickly that it can no longer be covered up. Deutsche Bank spokesman Ulrich babbles about “the demonization of profit,” “the attack against our economic system,” and the “criticism of profit”: “We are insufficiently committed to broadly clarifying the nature of employers’ profits, without which development and progress are impossible in a free market system”—that

¹ The Ahlener Program, adopted by the CDU on February 3, 1947, in the town of Ahlen, stated in its opening that the interests of capitalism and those of the German people were identical.

a part of this should also be for the common good is rejected by almost all owners of capital.

Eppler² hopes to secure support for the unpopular sales tax increase by using the taxation of higher income brackets for propaganda purposes. The CDU is afraid that the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties³ could lead to an ideological softening within the Federal Republic—Schröder's⁴ key argument is that the demonization of communism could lose credibility, because communism has come to represent expropriation and collectivization of the means of production. The CDU does not attack the contents of the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties, they struggle against ideological tolerance of the thinking of sworn enemies of capitalism.

The initiatives of the left after 1968, when they had a broad base everywhere, addressed the question of ownership and created a consensus behind their criticism. They did this in a way that constituted an attack against capitalist ownership and acted as a brake on capitalist profiteering. This took place in the squats in cities throughout the Federal Republic, in the Citizens Initiatives opposed to gentrification, in the initiatives for non-profit development in the suburbs—the Märkisch neighborhood, Nordweststadt in Frankfurt—and in the Citizens Initiatives opposed to the development of industrial sites in residential neighborhoods.

The Heidelberg SPK, through collective study and action, developed such a persuasive critique of the connection between illness and capitalism that SPK cadre have been detained in prison under §129 since July 71. The struggle of the students against the standardized testing which capital has imposed, and the campaign of the *Jusos* against private property development on public lands in the countryside, both have capitalist ownership as their target.

The most important strikes occurred in September 69, and were sparked by the year's high profits. The most powerful campaign of the student movement was that against the Springer Corporation: "Expropriate Springer." The most brutal police action was against the

2 Erhard Eppler, a member of the SPD and left-leaning Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation. He resigned in 1974.

3 Signed in August and December 1970, these two treaties were milestones in the SPD's *Ostpolitik*, normalizing the FRG's relations with Poland and the Soviet Union for the first time since World War II.

4 Gerhard Schröder was a CDU politician, Minister of the Interior from 1953 until 1961, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1961 until 1966 and Minister of Defense from 1966 until 1969.

Belgian community's squats in Kassel, where women and children were beaten with clubs, and against the squats in Hannover, which were destroyed through trials for damages. After Georg's murder, a sticker appeared in Berlin that read: "Killer cops murdered our brother Georg because they were worried about their loot."

Social Democracy and Reformism

Promise of reform has become the ersatz religion, the opium of the people. Promises of a better future have only one function, to provide a motivation for patience, endurance, and passivity. With all the efforts that are required to push reforms through, one could have a revolution. The people who say otherwise—like the *Jusos*, and like those who believe that the *Jusos* have the power to push through meaningful reforms—misunderstand the system's ability to resist change. They misunderstand its determination to adapt society to the exploitative conditions of capitalism and not the other way around. They do not understand that the system no longer feels constrained to act "within the bounds of the constitutional state." Above all, they fail to understand that the *Jusos* are the cream of the younger generation of social democrats.

There is, however, a difference between the SPD and the CDU. They despise the working class and the people in different ways. The SPD believes in the carrot and the stick. The CDU is only interested in the stick. The SPD is more experienced at leading the working class around by the nose. Wehner¹ is more experienced in deceiving and purging the left. Brandt is more experienced in the way to take over the leadership of a movement so as to neutralize it (e.g., the antinuclear movement in Berlin in 1958). They are more imaginative than the CDU in their tactics against the people.

The SPD pushed the amnesty through to defuse the solidarity that was developing around the trials of students, to disrupt the criticisms of the justice system, to break the solidarity the left was receiving against the justice system and the administration, thereby eliminating the rebellion without involving state security.

With their *Ostpolitik*, they beat back the criticism that their reform policies were in disarray. The Berlin Senate didn't send in the police in response to the occupation at the Bethanien Hospital and the establishment of the Georg von Rauch House, instead they chose to shut

¹ Herbert Wehner was leader of the SPD's parliamentary group from 1958 until 1983, and Deputy Chairman of the SPD from 1958 until 1973.

off the water and take over administration of the building. Because of the protests against his Persian trip, Heinemann is still gun-shy about diplomacy. Under Brandt's leadership, the ban on foreigners' organizations was already in the works. It is the SPD that has influence with the unions and the workers, while the CDU distrusts the unions and their method of functioning: accumulation of capital through voluntary membership donations instead of through the extraction of profits. And Posser² in many ways avoids lying: Mahler is a "fellow human being," and in his impact report he says Brigitte Asdonk had been mistreated.

The difference between the SPD and the CDU has been defined by some comrades as the difference between the plague and cholera. That's the choice the West German people face when they vote.

The system is taking the steps necessary to preserve the social status quo. Preserving the status quo requires: the concentration of European businesses to resist American competition; tax funded basic research to maintain high rates of profit; supplying weapons to the Third World through capital export markets so as to keep the liberation movements in check and using foreign production to keep wages down at home; keeping Siemens Annual General Assembly free from criticisms about Carboron investments;³ protecting the Shah from criticism about the death penalty in Persia.

Preserving the status quo requires: keeping anyone who is poor away from people who are addressing the issue of ownership; keeping the working class divided; using the accumulation of wealth and promises of reform to rein in the working class; keeping up a steady flow of propaganda: consumer ownership is the same as ownership of the means of production; all attacks against private property are the same; all attacks against private property are criminal; capitalist production is the natural state of affairs; capitalism is the best option available and the best that humans have come up with; criticisms of capitalism serve particular, selfish agendas of individuals and groups; wages are responsible for inflation; employers' profits serve the common good; whoever has a different perspective is making problems and stands alone and is, in the final analysis, a criminal.

2 Diether Posser, SPD Minister of Justice in the *Land* of North Rhine Westphalia from 1972 until 1978.

3 The project to build a massive dam in Mozambique, then a Portuguese colony. The right-wing Portuguese government had plans to settle over one million European colonists in the African country. By 1969, five German companies were implicated in the project.

It is a status quo of relations of ownership and ideas that cannot be preserved without the militarization of the class struggle and the criminalization of the left.

The Springer Press

The role of the Springer Press in the militarization of the class struggle was well described in 1968 during the “Expropriate Springer” campaign:

One can see the way in which the Springer Press’ public is produced following a simple formula: The Springer Press treats every attempt by people to free themselves from the constraints of late capitalism as a crime. Political revolutionaries are assigned the attributes of violent criminals. Political struggle is presented as individual, abstract terror, and the campaign against imperialism as pointless destruction.

The Springer Corporation represents the propaganda vanguard of aggressive anticommunism. The Springer Press is the enemy of the working class. They undermine its ability to act freely and in solidarity. They transform the reader’s desire for equality into a lynching instinct and the longing for a free society into hatred against everybody who wants to build a free society. The Springer Press serves the interests of war preparations. Their construct of the enemy is a way of saying, “If you’re ever disruptive, if you don’t leave your divorce to the divorce lawyers, the question of wage increases for contract negotiations, the issue of housing in the hands of the Housing Office, injustice in the hands of the judges, your security with the police, and your destiny to the vicissitudes of late capitalism, the response will be murder, torture, rape, and criminal attacks.”

from: *Destroy Bild*

The situation has gotten increasingly critical since the Molotov Cocktail Meeting in February 68.¹ *Bild* has launched the column “*Bild* Fights for You!” and reports daily successes in the struggle against exorbitant rents, against the criminalization of foreigners, against denunciations

1 In February 1968, a film by Holger Meins showing how to make a molotov cocktail was presented at a meeting held in Berlin to discuss the campaign against the Springer Press.

of large families, against forced retirement and the impoverishment of retirees. Before the oppressed masses turn their backs on the institutions of the constitutional state, *Bild* turns them against themselves; before their dissatisfaction with the institutions of the class state can become class consciousness, *Bild* takes the lead in expressing this dissatisfaction, and just as was the case with the Nazis in 1933, *Bild* speaks for capital, not for the proletariat.

Böll called this fascist, by which he meant, so there is no misunderstanding, the “agitation, lies, dirt.”² In this he, analytically and politically, hit the nail on the head. The reaction showed how sensitive the system really is, how unstable the status quo, how fascist *Bild*, and how agitated the climate at the Springer Corporation.

The Dialectic of Revolution and Counterrevolution

It isn't a question of whether we want the reactionary militarization or not; it is a question of whether we have the conditions necessary to transform the fascist militarization into a revolutionary mobilization, whether we can transform the reactionary militarization into a revolutionary one, whether it is better to lay down and die or to stand up and resist.

Kim Il Sung

Most people say, “It’s unacceptable.” Most people say, “The masses do not want this.” Many people say, “Fighting now will provoke fascism.” Böll says, “Six against 60,000,000—capital has everything, we have nothing.”

They see only the status quo. They see in the system’s violence only the violence, not the fear. They see in the militarization only the weapons, not the crumbling mass base. They see in *Bild*’s hatred only the hatred, not the dissatisfaction of *Bild* readers. They see cops with semi-automatic pistols and see only cops with semi-automatic pistols, not the lack of mass support for fascism. They see the terror against us and see only the terror, not the fear about the social explosiveness of the RAF, which must be “nipped in the bud.” They see in the political apathy of the proletariat only the apathy, not the protest against a system that has nothing to offer them. They see in the high level of suicide amongst

² On December 20, 1971, Heinrich Böll famously said that *Bild*’s news coverage “isn’t crypto-fascist anymore, nor fascistoid, but naked fascism, agitation, lies, dirt.”

the proletariat only the act of desperation, not the protest. They see in the proletariat's disinterest in economic struggle only a disinterest in struggle, not the refusal to struggle for a paltry percentage and the right to idiotic consumption. They see in the proletariat's lack of union organization only the lack of organization, not the mistrust of union bureaucrats as accomplices of capital. They see in the population's hostility towards the left only the hostility towards the left, not the hatred against those who are socially privileged. They see in our isolation from the masses only our isolation from the masses, not the insane lengths to which the system will go to isolate us from the masses. They see in the long periods comrades spend in preventive custody only the long periods in preventive custody, not the system's fear about the free members of the RAF. They see in the exclusion of DKP teachers only the end of the march through the institutions,¹ not the beginning of the adoption of revolutionary politics by children and their parents, which must be choked off. They see everything in terms of the existing movement, not the future one, only the bad, not the good: the dialectic of revolution and counterrevolution.

We're not saying it will be easy to build the guerilla, or that the masses are just waiting for the opportunity to join the guerilla. However, we do, above all, believe that the situation will not change by itself. We don't believe that the guerilla will spontaneously spring forth from the mass struggle. Such illusions are unrealistic. A guerilla that developed spontaneously out of the mass struggle would be a bloodbath, not a guerilla group. We do not believe that the guerilla can be formed as the "illegal wing" of a legal organization. Such an illegal wing would lead to the illegalization of the organization, i.e., its liquidation, and nothing else. We don't believe that the concept of the guerilla will develop by itself from political work. Therefore, we believe that the options and the specific role of the guerilla in the class struggle can only be collectively perceived and understood, that the guerilla stands in opposition to the consciousness industry.

We have said that any talk of their defeating us can only mean our arrests or deaths. We believe that the guerilla will develop, will gain a foothold, that the development of the class struggle will itself establish the idea of armed struggle only if there is already an organization in existence conducting guerilla warfare, an organization that is not easily demoralized, that does not simply lie down and give up.

1 A reference to Rudi Dutschke's proposed strategy. See p. 35, fn 2.

We believe that the idea of the guerilla developed by Mao, Fidel, Che, Giáp, and Marighella is a good idea that cannot be removed from the table. If one underestimates the difficulties in establishing the guerilla, if one is scared off by the difficulties against which we must struggle, this also shows that one underestimates the difficulties which the guerilla had to face even in those places where it has made a good deal of progress and is now anchored in the masses. We believe that these reservations are an indication of how far capital is prepared to go when it's a question of securing exploitative conditions, an area where they have never hesitated: not with the Paris Commune, not in Germany in 1918, not in 1933, not in Algeria, Vietnam, the Congo, Cuba, Latin America, or Mozambique, not at Attica, not in Los Angeles, Kent State, Augsburg or Hamburg.

**MAKE THE QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP THE KEY QUESTION
FOR ALL MOVEMENTS!**

**ADVANCE THE REVOLUTIONARY GUERILLA AGAINST THE
REACTIONARY MILITARIZATION!**

No party can call itself revolutionary if it fails to prepare for armed struggle, and that is true at all levels of the party. That is the way to most effectively confront the reactionaries at every step of the revolutionary process. Any disregard for this factor can only lead to missed revolutionary opportunities.

30 Questions to a Tupamaro

That's what we mean by SERVE THE PEOPLE!

4. ON CURRENT ISSUES

The Ruhland Trial

There is still a liberal press in the Federal Republic for whom the trial was a scandal. Ruhland was never as close to the Red Army Faction as he claims. His fawning, his reliance on evidence from the investigation rather than his own memory, the fact that Mahler's lawyer Schily was prevented from attending his trial, the fact that from the beginning of the trial it was established that there would be a verdict based on negotiations that neither the federal prosecutor nor the defense attorney would challenge (the *FAZ* reported this). As the *Frankfurter Rundschau* describes it, "like a nice teacher delivering a worn out speech to a sympathetic student"—proving very clearly that discovering the truth and due process have nothing to do with anything anymore.

The assurance that Ruhland is certainly telling the truth, the fulminations that those he has incriminated are not telling the truth, the assumption that anyone who doesn't cooperate with the justice system is guilty... that is exactly what class justice means, show trials, making them an—effectively ornamental—component of capital's general offensive against the left as the vanguard of the working class in the Federal Republic and West Berlin.

One cannot offer up *Verfassungsschutz* informants, as in earlier communist trials or as with Urbach, to a public increasingly polarized by the growing class contradictions. They expect the left-wing public to be dazzled by state witnesses presented by the Bonn Security Group, and it'll probably work. The person who's really screwed in this situation is Ruhland himself, since he no longer knows his friends from his enemies, up from down, the revolution from the counterrevolution. The poor pig doesn't understand how they're using him.

Urban guerilla struggle requires that one not be demoralized by the system's violence. One certainly should not be demoralized by a trial that shows us to be morally and politically in the right. Demoralization is in fact their goal. The Ruhland trial is only a very superficial event in the unfolding of history, the development of class struggle and the question of whether the urban guerilla is legitimate.

On Traitors

There are people who believe there might be some truth in the things Homann and the like are spreading around. At least, they say, Homann is no idiot. They take him to be what he presented himself as in *Spiegel*, a "political scholar"; from a vocabulary that encompasses both hunter

and prey.¹ These terms have nothing to do with class antagonism. The assertion that you are a scholar doesn't make you one when you deal in the techniques used by *Spiegel* journalists. The substance of Marxism, the dialectic of being and consciousness, excludes the possibility that police statements can contribute to the revolutionary strategy. Marxism can only be taught by Marxists, as Margharita von Brentano² told *Spiegel*. What Mandel has to say, Schwan³ couldn't spell.

Anybody who shares the interests of the status quo cannot possibly have anything to say about social change. But it is the nature of traitors to share the interests of the status quo, to want to return to their hereditary place in class society, to not feel right in unfamiliar circumstances, to only have a sense of identity in their own milieu, and to remain the object of their own development.

Ruhland only really feels comfortable in his old role as a criminal proletariat, handcuffed and oppressed, and Homann in the role of the lost son of the lumpen proletariat, ever at the beck and call of the bourgeoisie—in *Spiegel* and *konkret*—in his heart of hearts he has no interest in matters of the market. Sturm had an adventure and then fled back home to the bosom of her family.

Ruhland remains a victim and Homann a consumer, the overpaid illiterate and the profiteering academic—the class balance is re-established, legality is obviously the natural state of affairs. Regarding Homann, *FAZ* wrote: "...a journalist and visual artist, with a politically untrained but sensitive intelligence"; about Ruhland: "...he doesn't want to be a villain, he is perhaps an honest man with a guileless mind. Facing his guards in the court room, two young security police officers, he exhibits a completely natural and comradely bearing."

The psychological make-up of traitors is venal and conservative. The conservative *FAZ* sympathizes with these sons and servants.

We suffered from a false fascination and have underestimated illegality. We've overestimated the unity of some groups. That is to say that we have not taken into account all of the implications of the student movement being a relatively privileged movement, that we have failed to

1 Peter Homann had previously worked as a journalist for the *Spiegel*.

2 Margharita von Brentano was a sociology professor at the Free University, where a prize and a building are now named in her honour.

3 A. Schwan, a West Berlin professor and a member of the *Bund Freiheit de Wissenschaft* (Alliance for Free Scholarship). The BFW was an organization of right-wing university professors who accused the student movement of attempting to establish a left-wing educational system to the exclusion of free thought.

observe that for many people much of the politics of 67/68 is no longer relevant, as it offers them no way of increasing their own privilege. It can be pleasant to know a little Marxism, to have some clarity about the conditions of the ruling class' economic domination and their psychological techniques, to shed the self-imposed pressure to perform of a bourgeois overachiever, to embrace an alienated form of Marxism, acquired by privilege, as an item for one's intellectual wellbeing and benefit and not directed towards serving the people.

A preference for certain actions because they are illegal is an expression of bourgeois self-indulgence. The student movement, given its suppositions, could not be free of blind followers and people with a mercenary mentality. The tedious, long-term drudgery that must first of all be undertaken to lay the basis for the urban guerilla must seem to these people, who are so falsely programmed, like a scene from a horror show. Anyone who arrives with criminal fantasies, anyone who only wants to improve their personal situation, will certainly and inevitably improve their situation through treason.

We believed if someone said he had worked in this or that organization for such and such a period of time, then he must know what political work entails, what organization means, or else they would already have tossed him. We now know that we should ourselves have established the political organization necessary for the urban guerilla, that we made a mistake when we relied so readily upon others.

Above all, we think that on our own it would have been very difficult for us to have avoided this error and prevented the treason. We think that a false understanding of the police and the justice system, a false understanding of what SERVE THE PEOPLE means, and a false approach to contradictions within the New Left made the treason inevitable.

As long as traitors still find a place with comrades, not even receiving a single punch in the face, but rather finding understanding as to why they must quickly resume their bourgeois existence and do away with their other existence—because they can't tolerate another day in prison, they send others inside for years or deliver them up to the police death squads—as long as political cooperation with the armed power of capital continues to be tolerated as a political difference of opinion, as long as something that has long been politically condemned is treated as a private matter, treason will continue to exist. Without criticizing liberalism within the left, we cannot eliminate treason.

Traitors must be excluded from the ranks of the revolution. Tolerance in the face of traitors produces more treason. Traitors in the ranks of

the revolution cause more harm than the police can without traitors. We believe that is a general rule. It is impossible to know how much they will betray if they are threatened. Given that they are little pigs, one cannot permit them to be in a situation where they can be blackmailed. Capital will continue to turn people into little pigs until we overthrow its rule. We are not responsible for capital's crimes.

On Bank Robberies

Some people say robbing banks is not political. Since when is the question of financing a political organization not a political question? The urban guerilla in Latin America calls bank robberies "expropriation actions." Nobody is claiming that robbing banks will be all it takes to change the oppressive social order. For revolutionary organizations, it mainly represents the solution to their financial problems. It makes logical sense, because there is no other solution to the financial problem. It makes political sense, because it is an expropriation action. It makes tactical sense, because it is a proletarian action. It makes strategic sense, because it finances the guerilla.

A political concept that bases itself on parliamentary democracy, the political concept of competitive capitalism, a concept that understands class antagonism to be nothing more than a power struggle, that perceives the institutions of the class state to be institutions of a constitutional state, thereby definitely turning its back on progress and humanity... such a political concept cannot condone bank robbery. In the imperialist metropole, where the organization of the anti-imperialist struggle must have both legal and illegal components, the political struggle and the armed struggle, bank robbery cannot be dispensed with. It is, in practice, expropriation. And it points to the necessary method for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat against the enemy: armed struggle.

On Logistics and Continuity

Many comrades are impressed by the Tupamaros'¹ actions. They don't understand why, instead of carrying out popular actions, we're preoccupied with logistics. They can't be bothered with going to the trouble

1 Most likely a reference to the *West German* Tupamaros, not to be confused with their South American namesake. These groups had existed in West Berlin and Munich at the beginning of the decade, part of the same amorphous scene as the Roaming Hash Rebels. The 2nd of June Movement grew out of this scene, although several members would instead join the RAF.

to consider what the urban guerilla is and how it functions.

It is most likely maliciously intended when comrades recite the position of the Düsseldorf judge in Ruhland's trial: Ruhland was a handyman and the gang's mascot. The concept of the capitalist division of labor has proven to be an abstraction for them. In practice, they still conceive of proletarian comrades as jack-of-all-trades prefiguring some Silesian idyll. That the technical means can only be developed by working and learning collectively, that the urban guerilla must abolish the division of labor so that the arrest of one individual is not a disaster for us all—these comrades' imagination can't get that far. Not having the logistical problems at least partially resolved, not having oneself learned how to resolve logistical problems, not engaging in a collective learning and working process, would mean leaving the outcome of actions to chance technically, psychologically, and politically.

Resolving logistical problems assures the ongoing security of a revolutionary organization. We place great importance in the tactical requirements necessary to secure the continuity of the Red Army Faction. It is in the interest of capital to divide, to destroy, to break down solidarity, to isolate people, and to deny the historical context—in the area of production as well as that of housing, of commerce, of opinion making, of education—so as to guarantee ongoing profits. It is in the interest of capital to guarantee that conditions remain the opposite of those necessary for proletarian revolution: unity, continuity, historical consciousness, class consciousness. Without organizational continuity, without guaranteeing the organizational permanence of the revolutionary process, the revolutionary process is left to the anarchy of the system, to chance, to historical spontaneity.

We consider disregard for the question of organizational continuity to be a manifestation of opportunism.

On Solidarity

The revolutionary process is revolutionary because it makes objects out of the laws of capitalist commodity production and exchange, rather than being their object. It cannot be measured by market criteria. It can only be measured by criteria that simultaneously destroy the power of market criteria for success.

Solidarity, insofar as it is not based on market criteria, destroys the power of those criteria. Solidarity is political, not so much because solidarity is based on politics, but because it is a refusal to be subservient to the law of value and a refusal to be treated like a mere aspect of

exchange value. Solidarity is the essence of free action ungoverned by the ruling class; as such it always means resistance against the influence of the ruling class over relationships between people, and as resistance against the ruling class, it is always correct.

In the view of the system, people whose behavior is not guided by the system's criteria for success are lunatics, halfwits, or losers. In the view of the revolution, all those who conduct themselves with solidarity, whoever they may be, are comrades.

Solidarity becomes a weapon if it is organized and is acted upon in a consistent way against the courts, the police, the authorities, the bosses, the infiltrators, and the traitors. They must be denied any cooperation, afforded no attention, denied access to evidence, offered no information, and afforded absolutely no time and energy. Solidarity includes struggling against liberalism within the left and addressing contradictions within the left as one addresses contradictions amongst the people, and not as if they were a class contradiction.¹

All political work is based on solidarity. Without solidarity, it will crumble in the face of repression.

“We must prevent the possibility of unnecessary victims. Everybody in the ranks of the revolution must take care of each other, must relate to each other lovingly, must help each other.”

SERVE THE PEOPLE!

**MAKE THE QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP
A KEY QUESTION EVERYWHERE!**

SUPPORT THE ARMED STRUGGLE!

BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY GUERRILLA!

VICTORY IN THE PEOPLE'S WAR!

RAF
April 1972

¹ In his 1957 “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” Mao differentiated between two kinds of conflict or contradiction—“those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people.” While the former should be dealt with by attacking the class enemy, the latter should be dealt with through criticism with the goal of bringing about unity.