

Andreas Baader Regarding Torture

This statement was made after the testimony by Henck (the Stammheim prison psychiatrist), who concluded by declaring that isolation intensifies the impact of torture and, as such, constitutes a “philosophical problem.” Prinzing and the BAW interrupted Andreas seventeen times to prevent him from developing a coherent argument connecting isolation torture to his political perspective, to which it is directly related. This explains the blanks. This is an example of what it was like every day.¹

Events unfolded exactly as follows: the dead wing—and when that didn’t work as they had hoped, when no confession was forthcoming despite the effects of isolation becoming apparent—at the BAW’s request they locked Ulrike in an isolated psychiatric unit for eight weeks, “for observation,” as Götte said. And when that didn’t work either—they tried to arrange for forced drugging and a forced scintigraphy. The Federal Supreme Court’s idea being to open her head to see where human thought comes from; the BAW’s concrete project was stereotactical intervention in her brain. Witter was to be in charge of the drugging and scintigraphy; Loew was proposed for the brain surgery (note: both are connected to the University of Homburg/Sarre).

After the mobilization prevented this project, the dead wing was used again. The hunger strike and the smear campaign. Following the smear campaign came the law that makes it possible to exclude defense attorneys and to continue the trial in the absence of the accused,² which signifies the elimination of what remained of public accountability. Because the *hearing* to establish the prisoner’s inability to appear wasn’t public, the hearing was held in the special section—just like in Stammheim.

1 This introductory paragraph comes from the book *Karlek med förbinder* (“Love with Impediments”) published in Sweden in 1978 by independent publisher Bo Cavefors. The intent was to smuggle the RAF writings in a book with a phony cover into West Germany where publication and distribution of RAF material was illegal.

2 This legislation, part of the *Lex Baader-Meinhof*, was passed in December 1974. For more on this see page 345.

In Zweibrücken last week, in the case of Manfred Grashof, it was demonstrated how these obligatory medical examinations could be used to prevent a prisoner from testifying.

We certainly can't agree with the argument regarding torture as it is developed by Schily in his petition. That is to say, we refuse to be the object of his analysis. For the torture victim, arriving at a conception of torture is an ambiguous and impossible endeavor, because we can only appeal—and it's pointless—to an indignation based on a liberal conception of the state confronted with the deformation of that state, a deformation which is unavoidable for it is conditioned by the contradictions resulting from the movement of capital itself. In reacting to revolutionary politics, the state does not know what to do except torture, and in doing so it exposes itself as an imperialist state. The indignation of degenerate bourgeois antifascism only masks this. The latter is already so weak, corrupted by social democracy, and locked in revisionism, that it can no longer express itself in a meaningful way.

An example of this same old miserable situation. So bourgeois antifascism puts itself at the service of the state in the hope of changing it, and is itself changed by the state, becoming an instrument of the state, serving to prevent radicalization, before it is finally liquidated for being an expression of bourgeois ideology, of bourgeois humanism, of traditional bourgeois liberties, that disrupts the broader process of capital's ideological reproduction.

It makes no sense to talk about torture without at the same time talking about the perspective and strategy that will abolish it: those of *revolutionary* politics. The bourgeois antifascist blather on this subject ends up denouncing the torture victims themselves.

Certainly isolation is torture. No matter how those who suffer it experience it, it is a slow process that leaves one with lots of time to reflect on the destruction of one's political identity and is more horrifying than any physical pain we have experienced. Political consciousness falls into the trap set by consumer society, the trap of alienated production and alienated consumption, with all its complex cultural and psychological mediations. It is only in opposition to all this that one's identity can be developed—it is a process that can only be realized in struggle. In the agony of isolation, it is this process that they want to break down by depriving us of its basis: political practice and conscious social interaction. The prisoner is deprived of his political history, *his own* history to the degree that his conscious history is a political history.

It is also the end of one's personality.

To the degree that history is the process that creates the personality, if history is lost the personality is lost. Not because one forgets it (even if that is one manifestation), but because the ability to reconstruct it, to reflect upon it, to *recognize* it, is destroyed. One becomes unable to relate to what has been accomplished and what one has oneself accomplished.

It is the system that creates the relationship. One regresses and flounders about aimlessly amidst the ubiquitous mystifications of bourgeois socialization, because one is *alone* and can no longer see that these mystifications are utterly destructive.

The moment one ceases to fight—*can* no longer fight—one becomes a blank slate, as we have said, a *victim* (and, in this way, maybe one becomes innocent as well).

One's misery is fundamentally connected to the fact that it could be foreseen for some time, and to the fact that one knows that spending years in isolation is the equivalent of being shot. It is just harder to comprehend—this is part of what it's all about—and much more cruel.

The human being is in the most literal sense a “zoon politikon” not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society. Production by an isolated individual outside society—a rare exception which may well occur when a civilized person in whom the social forces are already dynamically present is cast by accident into the wilderness—is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other.

*Grundrisse*¹

It took us quite some time in the special section to recognize the method and the goal of isolation. I would say that to make sense of isolation it must be considered as part of the system as a whole: the fact that the system must respond with extermination to the contradictions that it produces, because it sees in these contradictions the possibility of its own definitive extermination. One who is re-educated is effectively destroyed by the special section. While this isn't the objective of forced

1 The *Grundrisse* by Karl Marx was a book of notes for future work on economics that was cut short by the author's death. This passage comes from Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Random House, 1973), 83-84, available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/cho1.htm>.

socialization, even the problem that it exposes, social dissatisfaction, can only be addressed by the destruction of the prisoners.

The attempt to clarify this and to justify the torture comes from Klug, who has since become Senator for Justice in Hamburg. This comes as no surprise, because he provides a corrupt liberal facade, disguising his filthy work with the pretence of morality—the need for re-education—although this society no longer has any morals.

Its basic problem, even in this respect, lies in an antagonism, in that re-education or brainwashing, as a project, must be legitimized by the system. That is to say, to use it, the system must be able to create the subject. But the thing the repressive state apparatus shares with the revolutionary (the prisoner) is that both know very well that they are, in their irreconcilable antagonism (as in their relationship), the expression of the very process by which the bourgeois state's legitimacy is disintegrating. The fact that the state has sensed the extent of this disintegration leads it to develop its extermination strategy against us.

Posser, as a Social Democrat, knows this—and acts accordingly, in spite of his ineffective and panicked denials). What he has foremost in his mind is not re-education, but the destruction of Ulrike and the propaganda value of presenting a destroyed prisoner in the trial, all of which would be made even more powerful if she confessed: the collapse. As an official in a party that props up the state, he is pragmatic: the smooth ritual of power is what he wants to orchestrate in order to plug the hole at the edge of the abyss his clique is hovering over. When problems arose—because the lawyers managed to mobilize people to break through the silence his plan required—he had a sick idea, typical of social democracy's version of the truth: buy them off. After all, the entire leadership of the Brandt/Schumacher party was bought off in 1945 by American capital, turning against the German proletariat in the process, so why not buy a witness? The government faction, of course. (...“against”... is not precise enough. The strategic function of social democracy is to safeguard the initiative of capital during the crisis.)

Witnesses for the crown, witnesses for the state: while this is an institution to guarantee overall ideological continuity and, above all, to affirm the constitutional state, it is also used to address our politics. Even if it is only a passing expression of the rupture on which we base our understanding of the state's reaction to armed politics.

Because the strategic necessity in this phase (the crisis of capital and the economic crisis of the state), of which each guerilla action is a

political interpretation, is to finally transform the state's political crisis into a rupture. This must be done through an ongoing offensive, in what will certainly be a long and contradictory process.

We will return to this subject.

I cannot talk about the person who has been tortured. What is proven with him, through what in the end constitutes the open liquidation of his fictional status as a subject—because he is the object of state repression—is simply the fact that from the moment they are no longer of use to capital, the values of bourgeois legal ideology appear as outdated fetters to the imperialist state.

What should be talked about is the source of torture—the state—and the process by which the state's entire counterrevolutionary strategy is reduced to torture, developing a new fascism within the state apparatus, its technology, its structures, and, always lagging a bit behind, its laws (and, finally, the structural and organizational means of mass communication, which dull the senses)—everything which torture presupposes at an institutional level.

We repeat here: torture is not a concept of revolutionary struggle.

Information about torture fulfils a protective function, but a mobilization based on such information must eventually turn against the very politics that the state is targeting with torture (and, in the final analysis, against the prisoners themselves). This will be the case as long as such a mobilization's politics are based on the moral reflexes of those who still feel comfortable with this state—and this is because they want to address it as revisionists. This means the mobilization must eventually turn against us if it is not combined with propaganda for armed politics, if it doesn't propagate the morals and strategy of armed struggle, which would mean that it hasn't itself accepted armed action yet.

Andreas Baader
June 18, 1975