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The Guerilla, the Resistance and the Anti-Imperialist Front

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Red Army Faction Strategy Paper**

We are going to discuss what we have learned in recent years, and what we want to do as a result. This is strongly limited to general considerations.

We believe that it is now possible and necessary to develop a new stage in the revolutionary strategy in the metropolises.

As a preamble, we will outline some of the terrain on which this can occur. Then we will examine some of the tentative discussions and real advances that have occurred, one following the other, over the last two or three years. An idea, a conception, has been established from which we can develop. The concrete beginnings show the possibility and the primitive structure of: **THE GUERRILLA AND THE RESISTANCE. A SINGLE FRONT.**

This is our starting point: to bring all those from different regions who recognize this reality in the political scene, often in a diffuse fashion and with only a vague idea, to another level of struggle; that is to say, to make them effective and give them a sense of strategy. If this is not done now, all the new, productive and open developments that have sprung from this, the possibility of developments unknown until now, risk being diluted and lost.

WE DETERMINED 77 TO BE THE TRANSITION POINT BETWEEN THE FIRST STAGE OF THE GUERRILLA STRUGGLE AND THE NEXT STEP.

The struggle between the guerrilla and the State in 77 led to a reversal of the political situation here. Within the dialectic of attack and reaction the conditions of struggle have been transformed. So, in these new conditions the forms of struggle could and should change. After 77, nothing could be like it was before; not the State, not the left, not the role of West Germany in international politics, not the role of armed struggle in the international class struggle. We committed errors in 77 and the offensive was turned into our most serious setback. We will return to this later in detail.

The offensive of 77 ended the struggle we had been waging since 70 and introduced a new stage. The entire period of struggles that gave birth to the RAF and allowed it to grow was concentrated on the question of power: will its prisoners be liberated, those people who symbolize the RAF, and whom the State uses to justify its own existence? In the same way, the struggle to impose the concept of urban guerrilla warfare poses the first fundamental question of power: is it realistic to implement the politics of armed struggle in West Germany in order to open up revolutionary possibilities? That is the question at the heart of all the actions and battles, all the police searches and media campaigns that

have gone on for all these years. That is why the government has pronounced us dead a hundred times.

That is why most of the left has stated loud and clear that armed struggle "has no future". The isolation, the high security wings¹, the Stammheim show trial²... all to mystify what was going on. And finally, there was 77.

Today, there is no doubt that they decided that Schleyer should die, that they decided to risk blowing up a hundred people at Mogadishu, and that they decided to liquidate the Stammheim prisoners, because they really hoped and believed that they could be finished with it once and for all, or at least for the foreseeable future.

The dialectic of development that makes everything different now shows exactly what the guerrilla movement is and what the State is, and how the struggle unfolds.

It almost worked - but the irony is that it helped us in a way, for it has created a situation where we can continue the struggle in changed, in fact better, conditions.

The extreme and unrestrained offensive in 77 hit them in the throat like no previous action; they were forced to become a strong State, to destroy all critical tendencies, to oppose society even in its most subtle manifestations, like an object that cannot be altered. This meant that in the autumn of 77 all opposition was presented with a new situation and new living conditions - both in actual reality and regarding perspectives for future struggle - that forced everyone to fundamentally redefine their relationship with power or else renounce their identity.

This qualitative leap is the personal, living moment within real people at which conditions of struggle here changed: IN FAVOR OF DEVELOPING A REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE.

There has been an attempt over the past seven years to bring the spirit and morale, the practice and political orientation of an irreversible break, to bring about the destruction of the system, to bring it into this political desert where everything is a facade, merchandise, conditioning, lies and falsehood. The guerrilla has tried to establish links with the struggles in South-East Asia, in Africa and in Latin America, and it identifies with these struggles. The guerrilla has tried to implant itself here and cause violent disruption – this is what Che called the stage of survival and implantation, the stage when the movement plants the concept of urban guerilla warfare, which makes headway and is taken up, even if at a given movement the existing illegal armed groups are destroyed. At the same time, it is a concept that is imposed by force, from any point of view and in an isolated way, not only against a repressive apparatus without historical precedent, but also against the conceptions of people we would rather deal with otherwise. In this scenario of one-dimensional lifelessness, which has existed for generations, the idea of liberation has

¹ High Security Wings - isolation units reserved primarily for political prisoners.

² Stammheim Show Trial - refers to the 1974 trial of the original RAF founders, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Andreas Baader. Holger Meins, a fifth co-defendant died on hunger strike on Nov, 9, 1974.

difficulty breaking through thick layers of corruption, alienation and mental and emotional deformation.

At this point, the question of whether to struggle and whether to struggle with arms in West Germany and West Europe has been resolved. It's obvious. That does not mean that the guerrilla's future is guaranteed; that is never the case, but the existence of a guerrilla politic now constitutes the basis from which the struggle can be developed.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL CLASS WAR, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUTHENTIC REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY IN THE IMPERIALIST CENTER IS A REALITY.

Around the world, the struggle for liberation, which is part of the guerrilla project, has become a concrete reality that everyone is discussing. It is now necessary to become totally implicated in the situation here and to proceed in an inverse movement taking resistance in the metropole to the front line of international class warfare.

It is a strategy that has its roots here in the totality of the imperialist center, in the necessity of resistance here. **A STRATEGY THAT MAKES THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE THE STAUCHEST ALLY OF THE STRUGGLES IN ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA.**

This means that from the moment one sides with the guerrilla and the liberation movements, there is a radical point of departure in the development of the anti-imperialist struggle.

This means to struggle with a strategically open conception, where each person based on the gravity of their own situation, based on their own history and subjective process, can arrive at the common goal of the destruction of the imperialist system and the revolutionary overthrow of society, and can enter into the concrete struggle in the context of guerrilla politics and become part of the revolutionary front here. This means that from the first instant their objective, like ours, is to develop the front in the metropole and to determine its direction. That is what we mean by "struggling together, one front."

Our line of action up until 77 was different from our current line, in that prior to 77 what was important was that which built the armed struggle or prepared its path, whereas what is now important is to regroup the guerrilla movement and the militant political struggles in an integrated whole as part of a strategy of development in the metropole.

We say: even if the illegal armed organization is the core of this strategy, it will not be strong enough until armed politics, militant attacks, the struggles that result from all forms of oppression and alienation, as well as the political struggle, are all united to determine the process of carrying out a conscious attack against the weak points in the imperialist center.

For us the subjective side of the developments since the dialectic of 77 - the possibility of a front in the metropole - is essential. This is still the case. It is decisive if the struggle is to develop in the imperialist centers, which do not normally give rise to revolutionary conditions, but are destructive and rotten due to the objective conditions, the way the crisis in managed and all social developments are turned into instruments of domination.

Obviously, nobody climbs to a higher level alone. The qualitatively different situation that exists now is born of the objective development of the international class struggle and can only be understood in that context.

The long history of wars of liberation in the colonized continents was crystallized in the struggle of the Vietnamese liberation front, and their victory gave rise to a new historical stage of anti-colonial national liberation struggles of peoples subjected to imperialism.

The effects of this historic process: the new strength of the new national States on the international political terrain - the generalized economic, political and social crises of countries in the imperialist center - the rise, parallel to the liberation struggles, of the Soviet Union as a superpower equal to the USA – all of this has destabilized the global balance of power between North and South, between East and West and between the State and society in the imperialist centers, and has thus destabilized the equilibrium between imperialism and liberation. In other words, the instability of the imperialist system produces, everywhere in the world, a situation within which imperialism, from the moment it suffers defeat at any point in the world system and loses one of its positions of strength in some domain - whether a strategic military position (Southern Africa or the Middle East) or an economic component (such as Central America or the Persian Gulf) - could slide into the final crisis of the system.

The struggle since Vietnam has become a situation of confrontation: moving to a point where due to overlapping interests or its individual importance in the global system, any sector - in the center of the liberation war, front line or otherwise, around the world - could spark a war of liberation.

The imperialist system is obliged - to put it in concrete terms - to reduce its power to a concentrated form: the State, the unified structure of the chain of States that are dependant on the USA, the reconstruction of the capacity for military, economic, and political action and of its instruments of domination. In an effort to regain control of global developments, they will attack everywhere; in the existing struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in the new national States, in the opposition between East and West, in West Europe... always with the objective of using this general offensive to re-establish their hegemonic position.

For the anti-imperialist struggle this means that it is necessary, faced with the unity of imperialist reaction, to carry out parallel struggles on all fronts. For they are all different sectors of a single front and struggles that are carried out side by side. No sector – and this includes the European sector - will become a front capable of shaking imperialism except by its own strength, its own specific development and its actual conditions and specific history.

The leap in the dialectic of confrontation in 77, which led to qualitatively new subjective conditions of struggle here, and the coming together at the base of the process of contradiction within the center, is completely integrated in the necessity and the possibility of international class struggle. It has arrived just on time.

It is true that in 77 the State also acted in this context. Towards the end of the first stage of the formation of the US chain of States, our defeat permitted them to pose as a superpower, seemingly without limits, not on the level of the national State, but on the

level of the global counter-revolutionary project. As the primary European power, which, in keeping with its function within the system of States dependent on the USA, will stand as the political force within West Europe against all forms of resistance, carrying out the attack on the international level. But by doing this they have helped the guerrilla strategy to develop in two decisive ways: by the West European States developing a politically unified struggle against the guerrilla the concept of a West European guerrilla front has become a reality, and by its very depth the current situation has provoked the sharpest polarization and the most profound rejection of the State, its logic and its laws in the history of West Germany – all of which makes the revolutionary front possible.

Right now there is no point in making any detailed analysis of the internal changes here. The lifestyle of people who have been struggling for some time indicates that they have already internalized the new situation and accept it as a point of departure. We simply note that the real opposition has broken with the system as never before. Cold, without illusions, now beyond the reach of the State, they no longer attempt to "change the system" or to build "alternative models" within the State. All of that has become completely grotesque. It is finished, completely finished - and it's only by finishing with the system that a perspective for life is conceivable.

Imperialism doesn't offer any positive future; there is nothing left except destruction. This is an essential part of the experience that roots militancy in all domains of life.

This reality is experienced at the economic base of life, in the arms race and the preparations for nuclear war, in the natural and social conditions of life and also on a personal level within each individual, a level at which alienation and oppression express themselves by massive deformation and the destruction of any depth of individual thought, of sensitivity, of the personality structure itself. The majority have lost all hope. Imperialism in the urban centers has perfected and systematized its domination to the point where people no longer feel themselves able to resist. The suicide rate has skyrocketed. People lose themselves in sickness, alcohol, tranquilizers and drugs. This is the reaction to the long history of defeats, hardship and suffering and depoliticization, so that now external violence is no longer seen to be the cause of all this.

From this misery comes the existing depth of the struggle and of hatred too. It is no longer a matter of brief spontaneous explosions of rage. This hatred has been developing for years. This is the terrain upon which the revolutionary front in the metropole now develops. So if the development of the system is seen, in the final analysis, as bordering on destruction and extermination, the resistance carries within itself – whether consciously or not - the element that means it now gives everything to have everything, and against everything, within concrete isolated struggles, struggles which the resistance surpasses. The unity of the revolutionary struggle becomes possible and necessary. That is, for all who want to carry out this struggle, a plan of action within which the break with the State, the revolt and the militant struggles can converge everywhere into one politic - a strategy of attack against the imperialist center. A plan of action that, by its practice, forcefully ends in this convergence.

The Anti-Imperialist Front

Over the past two years there have been a large number of tracts and actions having as their objective "a front with the RAF," and we know the need and the desire to achieve this cuts across all politicized domains. But there is still an enormous distance between the front that could potentially exist - given this need, this desire, and the beginnings we have - and its realization in the process of development as an organization or movement.

The front will not automatically come into being by juxtaposing the struggles with this proclamation. This proclamation will weaken and the mobilization to bring it into being will fade if the concept is not taken up as a practical question, in order to determine how it can be made a reality. And not only by us.

The front will not come into being unless absolutely everybody does their own practical research into the elements and the forms of unity of the armed struggle on the illegal front and militant political struggle on the legal front. That is to say, the means, the tactics and the structure; meaning: their field of action, which is itself illegal and consciously attempts to make progress in this strategic process.

THE FRONT IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL LINES IN THE ATTACK ON THE IMPERIALIST POWER - OR IT IS NOTHING.

Over the past two years, since we first conceived of the core of this new guerrilla structure, we have experimented to determine to what point this link will develop spontaneously, to what point it is strong - subjectively and objectively, materially as a possibility of attack - and to what point, on the other hand, it is difficult to start a strategic process that goes beyond isolated political initiatives and actions and the limited practical context.

It does not require morale, zeal or activity. It requires, from the point of deciding to carry out this struggle, that one begins to contemplate, in all aspects of the struggle, how to destroy the system here, and that one situates oneself in function of this.

We have gone through this experience ourselves and we will outline what we know: the decisive moment for the attack now depends on which option is taken up, and on the struggle of those who have adopted this concept or who wish to do so; meaning those who have begun to see themselves as subjects of the anti-imperialist front, those who have started to anticipate this within themselves and for themselves and determine all political initiative and action from this perspective and towards this end, who think of everything one undertakes within this perspective of the combat front.

Since the first discussions about the unity of the anti-imperialist struggle in 79, there have always been the same obstacles within and between groups, which have prevented that which could long since have existed: an active front .

We haven't done anything except have abstract debates about the myth of "militant action" or about "links with the masses." All efforts to have people associate with us or, on the contrary, to gain by these discussions the slightest links with us, are superfluous. We desire no other result but that the next steps be taken.

The front signifies more than actions. The front, that is the struggles that by their common objectives will become one single battle, and which, from that point, will

become practically and politically united, lives in the West European center in many forms. Actually, the anti-imperialist front in West Germany – that is militant attacks, militant projects coordinated in a united fashion that attempt to counteract the imperialist strategy, the political initiatives that clarify the politics, that intervene in the actual resistance - must take the form of a structured, organized struggle in order to have an effect. This is the practical goal of every development and all discussions around strategy.

The front signifies more than building a legal structure around the guerrilla. We have said that there is no "legal arm of the RAF" and we do not want to have one. Sure, we have some contacts with people in all areas, and this is also part of the concrete politics of the guerrilla, but it is only by autonomous and specific development in this area and by having common objectives that the anti-imperialist resistance can become part of the anti-imperialist front, and it is only in this way that the struggle on this level can heat up politically and achieve continuity and force - and in a general way complete autonomy and accountability in each milieu of revolutionary political struggle in West Europe are essential to this.

The discussions that always remain at the same level, in which isolated points of view oppose professions of faith, the narrow spirit of isolated groups, the incapacity to take initiative... all of that disappears the moment one understands and internalizes the reality of the situation: that the anti-imperialist front is an urgent necessity, and even though it is underdeveloped, it could be strong in West Europe, creating enormous possibilities on the level of an international war of liberation.

THE SIGNIFICANT COMBAT FRONT AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST STRATEGY HAS TO BE THE NEXT IMMEDIATE GOAL.

Judging by the vast number of articles on the subject and the determination and heat of militant actions, people know a lot about imperialism and its plan – but this is useless if the two elements don't result in a decisive link that will permit us to evolve together in this struggle.

STARTING WITH WHAT NOW EXISTS, WITH THAT WHICH EXISTS IN THE ACTUAL RESISTANCE AND THE CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE IN THE METROPOLE, THE PRACTICAL, STRUCTURAL AND POLITICAL ELEMENTS AND THE LINES OF ATTACK AGAINST THE CORE OF IMPERIALIST POWER HERE THE WEST GERMAN STATE AND NATO, MUST BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD, SO AS TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST THEM.

The anti-imperialist struggle is in retreat in the face of the, certainly contradictory but unified, imperialist machine. There was no new anti-imperialist mobilization against the post-Vietnam imperialist reconstruction and the beginnings of the crisis, nor against the preparations and the beginnings of their offensive. In this stage the resistance was paralyzed by the failure of the left following 68. In fact the anti-imperialist mobilization only formed recently, so the reactionary attacks have had a long time to develop on all levels. Their offensive is developed. The spontaneous resistance is large, but is not decisively guided by anti-imperialist politics. In the future, anti-imperialism must be present as a significant factor and develop initiatives in the discussions about and against

the imperialist projects that now determine the course of history: the American war strategy in Europe - the reactionary offensive of the home State - the reactionary strategy of the chain of States for rolling back the liberation movements and the new national States, as well as against the Socialist States.

At this point in history, the future is not guaranteed. American imperialism – in its historic crisis, where for the first time in forty years its existence is threatened - has recourse to the most extreme means, and, unless somebody prevents it, it will use them if the system slides into an uncontrollable crisis.

Given the possibility of nuclear destruction, this certainly takes on a catastrophic perspective, but those of us who are the exploited and oppressed of the entire world have no reason to fear. Because if it means the end of imperialism then it serves our needs. Faced with the possibility of nuclear destruction, our attitude is, firstly, that we do not fear it and, secondly, that we can prevent it, but only by revolutionary war. The gravity of the situation resides less in the possibility of nuclear war than in the fact that American imperialism is engaged in a general offensive on all fronts with which it intends to restore its hegemony, something that is not possible except on a scale greater than the current breadth of its domination. But it is possible to intervene against this offensive, and whether the attempt to do so ends in their favour or whether the outcome is a qualitative leap on the world level of the struggle for liberation (and thus against them) depends decisively on the anti-imperialist struggle in West Europe. On a scale much larger than its domination, this means that what is at stake is the production of destruction in daily life, in the conditions of life, in manipulation and repression - the death and destruction of human subsistence for millions of people for a long time (which does not necessarily mean the big war).

For us, given our relative weakness in the face of the power that controls almost everything here, the situation is such - to a given point this is certain - and for a certain time yet - as to prevent the construction of a front that is able to threaten their power here. To resolve the generalized crisis at the social, socio-political and politico-military level, they are forced to appropriate power in an aggressive fashion and to violate the political limits of the metropole, the "tolerable limits" - democracy, well-being, internal peace - and they can't do this forever if they are constantly confronted with anti-imperialist struggle and constantly unmasked in open confrontation, for this will lead to a break in the fine ideological thread between the State and society. These political limits have become historically legitimized for the imperialist centers in West Europe. They are established pillars of the system against the workers' movement and the wars of liberation, and they can no longer be destroyed without totally destroying society. This is where the relative weakness of the anti-imperialist struggle in the metropolises of West Europe could be transformed into a source of strength in the internal struggle. On the level of the entire imperialist system, their global project of restructuring can only succeed if their plans within the imperialist centers unfold in a relatively easy and rapid fashion without serious resistance. Their project could not survive the break caused by an anti-imperialist struggle here, given the international contradictions. They would have to impose solutions internally, as is the case abroad, by exercising the totality of their power, at the risk of the international class war being unified at a higher level, that is to say, at the risk of fueling the struggle to dismantle the imperialist system.

This is the starting point from which we fight. And it is only this awareness of our opportunity, of our power, of the chance that we have, especially here - and, of course, also the awareness of our responsibility - that mobilizes us to create and develop the anti-imperialist front.

THE REVOLUTION IN WEST EUROPE HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE OF THE WORLDWIDE CONFRONTATION.

The offensive, both within and spreading out from West Europe, based on the central State (i.e. West Germany), is essential for imperialist strategy to be able to ensure both its global domination as a functioning system and the reproduction of capital in a new cycle. In the face of this offensive, for us the development of the Front in the metropole is a vital necessity. It is necessary in order to be able to counter the present tendency of the global process of liberation to get bogged down in the opposition between East and West and to allow countries that have achieved national liberation to break with present obligations necessitated by their State development.

Amongst the centers, West Europe is the point where the East-West and North-South frontlines meet; this is both the starting point and the base for their restructuring project, specifically the division between State and society here. It is here that they must try to develop the necessary military power to put pressure on the socialist States and to counter the struggles for national liberation, it is from here they must attempt to integrate the new developing States into their system, and - as a condition for all of this - it is here that they must forcefully impose a policy of internal conformity... if not consensus, then at least a sort of internal peace. It is in this sense that they are brought back to the centers. They must use all their might to aggressively impose the global reactionary plan at all levels in the centers.

Medium-range missiles, neutron bombs, conventional weaponry, concentration and centralization of capital, rationalization, massive planned unemployment, turning humans into simple extensions of the machine, overdevelopment of the indispensable energy policy for them too because of its importance as a way of waging war on the world market, destruction of social structures according to the interests of the police and of money - exploitation in the race for the necessities of life, professional training conceived of as a factory, police, justice, prison, etc.. This is what their offensive is all about; conceived in military fashion it is the iron vice squeezing all distinct sub-sectors of urban society, which long ago made the choice for us as to whether we want the front in the urban center or not - the war has already begun. The only question today is whether there will be a revolutionary front to oppose the reactionary offensive.

The anti-imperialist front is born against this horizon in the centers. Its significance is not just measured by whether or not it is able to stop this or that imperialist project right now. That which it hopes for, which it always hopes for as a fighting section within and on behalf of the international front, is that, with the beginning of the total confrontation between imperialism and liberation, a balance of forces can be created that will make the social revolution possible here.

OUR DEFINITION OF GUERRILLA ACTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANTI- IMPERIALIST FRONT MEANS RESISTANCE AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST MACHINE, WHICH IS GETTING READY TO ATTACK HERE,

AND MEANS THE ATTACK AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORLD STRUGGLE.

The attack, which the whole situation demands, must come from here. On the world stage, the two blocs stand face to face, petrified by their potential for destruction and congealed in their weaponry. Liberation movements have become States, and those not yet States act, in their struggle to become one, virtually as if they were. International policy and international relations constitute the principle terrain for these liberation movements and new States. This consists of the opposition between East and West (which reproduces itself in these countries), the world market in which and in opposition to which they are forced to develop themselves and the new political power of the liberated States on the world stage, which allows them some room to maneuver. It is a logical development. It is both the expression of the power attained by the struggle for national liberation and of the weakness that obliges them to continue to function in the State system which imperialism has created.

In this situation, the new States' political orientation is faced with two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, increasing misery, mass poverty and underdevelopment push them to adopt radical solutions. On the other hand, the inevitable nature of the struggle to obtain those resources which are almost only available from the imperialist States pushes them to come to terms with imperialism. So the new States are driven to accept increasingly contradictory obligations, with which comes the risk of catastrophic splits through civil wars, famine, hopelessness, repression and intervention. But they have not chosen these contradictions. They are above all the result of colonial history, from which imperialism still profits by exploiting the destruction it leaves behind after it is chased from the country.

The urban guerilla and the militant struggles today result from a dynamic launched by the liberation movements - and if today, after 30 years, a movement has been able to develop here thanks to their struggle, the situation there is actually and essentially a result of the weakness of the struggle here.

There can be no perspective for the destruction of the imperialist system as long as the perspective is not opened up in the centers of power, of consumption and of production. In other words, as long as the politics have not taken a material form, which, as a significant force in the international struggle, in its real movement, its goals and its continuity, shows a willingness and the prospect of be done with the system. It is only from this moment that a revolutionary leap in consciousness is conceivable.

Imperialism will not collapse by itself. Nor will it collapse by being encircled and strangled from the outside. Unless the front develops here, the world will repeat the very experience that has been fatal to the history of class struggle in Europe and, on the political level, to the opposition between East and West: trench warfare, bitter and bloody. Imperialism is militarily and politically aggressive, overdeveloped in technologies and the techniques of production and organization. Its goal is to once again be the sole world power, whether this means militarily defeating the Soviets and the socialist States, which wish to remain an equal power, or whether this means politically defeating the consciousness of the peoples of Africa, Latin America and Asia. It will

surely fail, but it is politically, militarily and economically powerful enough to block those countries that have realized their national liberation by dictating to them the conditions of their development. It may also be powerful enough to impose an arms race, and to use the world market in order to unsettle the economy of the socialist countries. In the metropole, where the State never stops trying to carry imperialist power to hegemony by exploitation, police state tactics, and crisis management, it will stamp out a decaying society.

The Struggle For Liberation

If the resistance and the revolutionary offensive constitutes a necessity due to our particular situation here, there is also, for us, and for us alone, the possibility of opening a perspective for the end of the system - a perspective, which, by destroying the growth of imperialism, exceeds its own function.

As the metropole matures, the productive social development has begun to transform itself into destruction. The revolutionary struggle here, with its goals and structured as a fighting front, allows us to see a social future beyond the historical limits of the system of existing States. In this historical stage of imperialism, derailed abroad and disintegrating at home in generalized crisis, the fact that the conditions are ripe for the destruction of the metropole also implies that the conditions are ripe for the radical struggle to reverse social conditions, in the sense of the communist goal whereby one does not imagine life as a mere step in transition, nor is the victory conceived of as taking State power, but instead as a seamless process of resistance that is a counter-force and liberatory transformation.

THE REVOLUTIONARY POLICY IS THE STRATEGY WHICH IMAGINES THE WHOLE OF THE RESISTANCE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EVERYDAY REALITY HERE AS A PROCESS OF STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND AS COMPRISING A PART, A SECTION AND A FUNCTION WITHIN THE WORLD STRUGGLE, IN WHICH THE GOAL CAN ONLY BE REACHED BY COMBINED ACTION.

This policy has nothing to do with a global theory. It does not construct one of those ideological models which succeed one another and which one pretends will be realized later. It can only be a real process.

The construction of Utopia is a long-term and concrete strategy – one could say a lifestyle - within which the strategic goal of destroying imperialist power is tied to a real transformation right now. To the degree that the front has developed, this process liberates the political terrain and the individual from the State – it creates, by building a counter-force, the necessary conditions for the politico-military offensive. The production and material development of the Front includes re-establishing fully human development in the combatants' relationships. Immediate transformation, liberated territory and revolution are fully integrated in the process of resistance - and it is only in this way that one finds the truth.

The revolutionary strategy here is very simply a strategy against their strategy.

WHOEVER ATTACKS THEIR STRATEGIC PLANS OR THEIR CONCRETE PROJECTS, WHOEVER, BY MATERIAL ATTACK, POLITICALLY BREAKS THE

IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVE IN ITS INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL ORIENTATION AND WHOEVER THUS BLOCKS THEIR PLANS BEFORE THEY CAN EXECUTE THEM, WHOEVER DOES SO CREATES THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT BECOMES THE NEW RESISTANCE AND THE PROCESS OF THE FRONT ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, WHOEVER, IN THE FORM OF A SIGNIFICANT COMBAT FRONT, CREATES BY MATERIAL FORCE A BREAK IN THE CONSENSUS IN THE IMPERIALIST CENTER, AND WHOEVER, BY PROPAGATING THIS BREAK ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, DEPRIVES THEM OF THEIR LEGITIMACY OR THEIR ATTRACTIVE QUALITIES, WHICH THEY NEED TO REPRODUCE THEIR FINANCIAL SYSTEM, THEIR SYSTEM OF MANIPULATION AND OF DESTRUCTION IN THE NEW STAGE, IN OTHER WORDS, THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WORLD... AND WHOEVER, AS A RESULT OF THE RADICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE METROPOLE, SHOWS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE END OF THE IMPERIALIST POWER AND OF ITS EXISTENCE AMONG HUMANS THEREFORE CONTRIBUTES TO BRINGING ABOUT A FREE SOCIETY.

Regarding 77

The problem which played against us during the kidnapping of Schleyer was, as regards our concrete goal of liberating the prisoners, that we did nothing to develop a political objective during the offensive, nor did we elaborate on the apparent contradictions during the crisis. Even though the action touched a nerve for the State, we did not react, on the political level, to the challenge we were presented with.

In the summer of 77 the situation of the prisoners had reached a point where we could no longer put off an action to liberate them. The prisoners were on a thirst strike and Gudrun was dying.

Since Stockholm³ the question of the prisoners had become central to the guerrilla offensive. We knew that at this time any attack could only be made from a position of relative weakness, but we chose to attack because the war is not a given between us and them, but exists only if one materially creates it in terms of the question of power. The prisoners constitute a central question within which two elements, beginning from the demand for their liberation, meet and crystallize: the relationship maintained between the guerrilla and their imprisoned comrades, the relationship between everyone who shares the struggle, and the importance of each to the whole - and also the power relations in general, because the guerrilla materially and directly challenged State power, because the attack consciously aimed to create a political crisis in suppressing one of the pillars of their power, as with Schleyer (it is only here that the possibility exists), and thus exposed the internal structures of power by forcing them to react.

We hoped to confront the SPD with the decision of whether to exchange these two individuals who embody the global power of FRG capital in a way that few others do.

³ Stockholm - reference to the April 25, 1975 seizure of the German Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, by the 6 member Commando Holger Meins of the RAF. They demanded the release of 26 political prisoners, including the Stammheim prisoners. A police assault on the Embassy resulted in an explosion, which killed one guerrilla, Siegfried Hausner, and one hostage.

Ponto for his international financial policy (revealing how all the German banks, especially his own Dresdner Bank, work to support reactionary regimes in developing countries and also the role of FRG financial policy as a tool to control European integration) and Schleyer for the national economic policy (the big trusts, concerted action, the FRG as an international model of social).

They embodied the power within the State which the SPD must respect if it wishes to stay in power.

Our action was meant to expose the contradiction that lies in the tension between the strategy of American capital (which has determined the SPD's conception of the State and all of its reactionary maneuvering in matters of internal and external policy since 1945) and the banks and trusts, or, if you prefer, national capital. Certainly national capital cannot formulate a clear policy in the face of the hegemony of the American line - at least to take "as is" the limited provincial variations of a Kohl⁴ or an Albrecht, etc., or Strauss's⁵ grand projects which he has been trying in vain to carry out for 20 years. But the strength of this national capital, which permits it to be competitive and to spread itself vertically within the capitalist structure, naturally finds its expression in a consensus and in the national elites' consciousness, such that Schmidt⁶ is obliged to make the most of the high and the low in the national and international context.

The political escalation of the action was defused mainly by the fact that Ponto⁷ was not successfully kidnapped and, as such, one of the two pillars of the tactical and political conception was lacking. But our most important error was to have not completely reconsidered the action when the federal government let the first ultimatum pass, when it became obvious that they had abandoned Schleyer and were awaiting his death⁸, which would bring them rapid consolidation. As to Schleyer, in spite of all the communications back and forth, we can only conclude that his relationships and his influence amounted to nothing in the face of the growing homogeneous imperialist strategy.

They acted according to the tactics and psychology of the BKA: avoid any official decision by the government, prolong the action by pretending to negotiate, all in order to facilitate the police's objective, prevent any public pressure by means of an information blackout and impose, by Wishnewski's trip to a so-called welcoming country, a "condemnation of international terrorism", with the focus in this case on the prisoners.

All of this objectively left us the time and the opportunity to exploit this situation politically. For example, to immediately use Schleyer's conversations in order to aggravate the contradictions which were disrupting the "unity of all democrats," contradictions which went as far as the CSU's attempt to rid themselves of Schmidt by proposing the release of the prisoners, to be immediately followed by the declaration a

⁴ Helmut Kohl - leader of the CDU, the Christian Democratic Party.

⁵ Franz Josef Strauss - leader of the Bavarian CSU, Christian Social Union, the extreme right equivalent of the CDU in Bavaria.

⁶ Helmut Schmidt - leader of the SPD at the time of the Stammheim events. The SPD was then the governing party and Schmidt the Chancellor.

⁷ Ponto's kidnapping failed and he was executed in his home by a RAF Commando on July 30, 1977.

⁸ Schleyer's kidnapping occurred on Sept. 5, 1977. On Oct. 20, his body was found in the trunk of a car. He was executed by the RAF in retaliation for the murders of Ensslin, Raspe, and Baader in Stammheim on Oct. 18.

state of emergency, which would have signaled the end of any social-democratic policy, i.e., an open recognition of the State crisis, which must then be stopped at any price.

In this situation, characterized by an escalation in which our defensive attitude became obvious, Commando Martyr Halimeh⁹ decided to intervene, as it was possible for them to do so given the pressure.

It was the first time a commando from a liberation movement directly intervened in the confrontation here and made the metropolitan struggle their own. We have frequently spoken about the tactical conceptions and incorrect strategies regarding this action, which provided the State with the opportunity to go on the counter-offensive. We take full responsibility for these errors.

It was an error on our part not to seek the resolution in the metropole itself, but to carry the escalation into one of the new national States. In effect, because of the balance of power, such a decision could only be addressed here because it concerned prisoners who embodied the struggle here and because it was a question of the State isolating the RAF. The tactic of hijacking an airplane - tied to an action that originated in the metropole and which aimed to polarize and lead to a break between the people and the State in the metropole - could only neutralize the attack because the people in the plane found themselves in the same situation, treated as objects, as the imperialist State always and in all ways places people - and this destroyed the goal of a revolutionary action.

The incorrect conception of the action, which played against the commando, was the weapon which the government used to corner them, starting from the principle that the commando obviously attempted and continued negotiations as long as it saw any hope of freeing the prisoners in West Germany.

As for the SPD, it chose to solve matters by carrying out a massacre, as it had in Stockholm. This is because it challenges all the people's preconceptions when American interests, the central form of domination and consolidation, are attacked. At the time Schmidt said, "It was impossible to know if it would result in an acceptable conclusion".

The SPD opted for a military solution at a time when a guerrilla victory in West Germany - the central country for the reactionary integration of West European States - would have meant a decisive setback for the imperialist reconstruction plans.

West Germany took the lead in the reactionary counter-offensive to consolidate the mechanisms of internal security in West Europe. But with Stammheim and Mogadishu, a central element of the Social Democratic policy was unmasked - the hidden war. The imperialist State appeared brazenly and overtly reactionary; it no longer shied away from comparisons with its Fascist past, but embraced them; the "desert foxes" of Mogadishu as an example for German youth.

But this also exposed the weakness of the metropolitan States, with the internal fragility of this structure becoming externally clear in a fashion more obvious than ever before.

⁹ Commando Martyr Halimeh - a Palestinian commando that hijacked a Lufthansa airliner to Mogadishu on Oct. 18, demanding the release of the imprisoned RAF guerrillas. All but one were killed when the GSG-9, a special German police unit, stormed the plane. Several hours later the "suicides" of Ensslin, Raspe, and Baader, as well as the "attempted suicide" of Irmgard Möller, were reported.

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