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To the Revolutionary Prisoners in the Imperialist Prisons of Western Europe

Early February 1989

We have begun a collective hunger strike again and want to write you briefly.

The time is ripe. After 18 years of isolation (lately with increased differentiation programs), we need a material breakthrough for ourselves and the association of all prisoners from the struggle; there is no way the situation can remain the same!

We do not want to waste a lot of words on the subject of isolation. Enough has been said about that over the past 18 years. But we see this struggle not only as a specific and necessary part of our long history of struggle against isolation, but also we think that it is of importance in the wider struggle against the imperialist counterrevolutionary projects, and as such is connected with all struggles of the West European revolutionary prisoners for collectivity and revolutionary identity - this is *one* struggle, one front-line in the whole class confrontation in West Europe - as it is also one front-line in the world-wide spectrum of struggles against the imperialist prisons.

More and more, white torture¹ is being exported from here, above all within the context of West European integration - in which the coordination and standardization of the counterrevolutionary programs is of the utmost importance, especially on the terrain of the imperialist prisons. Therefore we consider it particularly necessary, and a particular responsibility of ours, to break this strategy of extermination here; for this is where we have been confronted with this kind of torture for the longest time, and it is we who have the most experience with it.

We also hear from Spain about forceful attempts to break apart the collectives

¹ A reference to sensory deprivation which was one of the intended effects of complete isolation. Many human rights observers and medical professionals maintain that this constitutes a form of torture. As Dutch psychiatrist Sjeff Teuns stated in 1973 ("Isolation/Sensorische Deprivation: Die programmierte Folter," in *Ausgewählte Dokumente*): "Sensory deprivation – because it can only be produced through human manipulation – is at once the most human and inhuman method for the protracted degradation of life. Applied for months or years, [it] is the proverbial 'perfect murder' for which no one – or everyone, except the victim – is responsible." [quoted in Jeremy Varon's *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, p. 218].

of prisoners from ETA² and GRAPO-PCE(r)³, using solitary confinement and isolation. The political prisoners in Belgium are also confronted with isolation. The Irish, the Palestinian and the Kurdish prisoners are confronted with isolation. The degree of this isolation is indicated by the fact that after 3 months we still don't know which prisons the Palestinians are being held in. We don't know what the current situation of the prisoners in North Ireland is. We know from our comrades from Action Directe⁴ with what kind of meticulousness the regime of isolation is carried out against them. We know every detail of their experience from their struggle for revolutionary collectivity and identity during their last hunger strike, during which they were immediately confronted with the whole "heavy handed" strategy of the West European bloc of counterrevolution, and during which they asserted themselves against the attempt to snuff out the existence and consciousness of revolutionary antagonism. But the promises that were made to them during their last strike have still not been fulfilled and we insist that this situation must change as well.

What the Italian comrades of the communist prisoners collective Wotta Sitta⁵ said in their statement of dec. 18th 1987 is also true for us:

“...also in Italy, the projects for the political solution are accompanied by periodic waves of arrests of revolutionary and antagonist proletarians and by a increasingly perfected strategy of differentiation and selection in these prisons. This reality is expressed in different ways all over Europe and shows that the struggle against the project 'regretter - renoncer - political solution' cannot be separated from the necessary struggle against the strategy of differentiation and isolation in prison. This strategy can now be destroyed only by developing an intensive dialectic of unity between the revolutionary forces and the working class movement across Europe. The struggle against isolation and for the association of the prisoners from guerrilla movements in different European countries is also our struggle and the struggle of the whole revolutionary movement and the class! The project of "exemplary pacification - of renunciation - of the political solution - dialogue - amnesty", which certain sections of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the reformist left carry from Italy to the rest of West Europe, is everywhere followed by increasing isolation, differentiation, physical attacks, communication bans and the attempted destruction of every revolutionary and proletarian antagonism - vis-a-vis the whole revolutionary movement in Western Europe.”

² ETA – a Basque nationalist guerilla organization.

³ GRAPO-PCE(R): the military wing of the banned Reconstituted Communist Party of Spain, the First of October Anti-Fascist Resistance Group (GRAPO) was an armed underground organization.

⁴ Action Directe was an anti-imperialist guerilla organization which cooperated with the RAF in the 1980s.

⁵ Wotta Sitta: a collective of prisoners held in various special prisons, coming from the different Italian guerrilla groups (Red Brigades, NAP - Armed Proletarian Units, Red Brigades-Guerrilla Party, COLP - Communists Organized for Proletarian Liberation, Resistance).

We will quote briefly what two imprisoned Portuguese comrades from FUP⁶ said in an interview after the “left” media in our country had spread a big story about a deal and agreement of the political prisoners:

“Well, we have seen that some newspapers allegedly quoted ‘sources’ amongst the prisoners and that supposedly the FP-25⁷ and the ORA⁸ are also involved in it. We are, for our part, waiting for these organizations to comment on this publicly. Furthermore, we are convinced that the government doesn’t want to release us and it swings the bait of negotiation in front of us in order to break our morale, to divide us and to set us against each other. It is not enough for them that we are in jail. They want us to grovel before them. This is why we won’t have anything to do with negotiations; revolutionaries have nothing to negotiate with bourgeois power. We know that some people will call this position dogmatic... when Otelo now sends appeals to his ‘friend’ Soares⁹, who is the one who ordered his arrest; he is liquidating himself as a revolutionary. We deplore this about-face that we have seen coming for a long time... What the real struggle within the left is about and what doesn’t appear in the headlines, is that the revolutionary left, which is still weak, has to confront the parliamentary left, which has come to terms with the regime. We think that eventually the revolutionary left will be the only alternative for the masses...”

The West German dimension of projects of pacification is a reaction to the revolutionary break that has occurred in the metropole, and at the same time it is also an expression of their helplessness and aggressiveness. It is also an attempt to disorient people, for they are faced with people struggling for a new level of consciousness, an awareness that in the new international situation there must be a united protracted *international* revolutionary process, for which revolutionary politics in the imperialist centres are a necessity. Today the struggles must develop simultaneously and there has to be a break in the imperialist centers, otherwise the worldwide balance of power will continue to develop in a destructive way, here as well as in the three continents.

Palestine Turkey Peru Chile El Salvador South Africa USA

- Everywhere isolation is used against imprisoned revolutionaries. We see this in how imperialist repression everywhere attempts to solve problem by liquidating imprisoned revolutionaries with the increasing use of white

⁶ FUP.

⁷ FP-25: The Popular Forces of the 25th of April, a guerilla organization active in Portugal from 1980 to 1986.

⁸ ORA.

⁹ Otelo most likely refers to Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, a popular hero in Portugal who played a key role in the Revolution of 1974, who was arrested in June 1984 for belonging to the FP-25. He was released on a conditional basis in 1992. Mario Soares was president of Portugal from 1986 to 1996.

torture, because they hope that this way they will avoid public protests against torture, but this will fall apart in the face of the struggle of the prisoners and the whole revolutionary anti-imperialist movement. Even if this sector - the terrain of the imperialist prisons - is only one part of the whole confrontation between the international proletariat and the imperialist bourgeoisie it is also a breaking point in this confrontation in the context of the whole process for a social revolution

All our solidarity goes out to all fighting revolutionaries in the imperialist prisons and we send you revolutionary love knowing that, in the struggle for liberation, we will fight together through this stage against imperialist prisons.

Through this hunger strike we also fight for political discussion across all borders, for an authentic exchange of experiences between all different revolutionary processes and for a common political perspective.

Association of all prisoners from the guerrilla and resistance in one or two large groups into which new prisoners will be integrated, with access to common yard time with the other prisoners; association for all prisoners who are struggling to achieve this objective.

Release of all prisoners for whom recovery from sickness, injury or torture through isolation is impossible while in prison

Release of Günter Sonnenberg, Claudia Wannersdorfer, Bernd Rössner and Angelika Goder.

Free choice of medical care for all prisoners without *Staatsschutz* control.

Access to political information and free communication for prisoners with all groups in society.