

# The Guerilla, the Resistance, and the Anti-Imperialist Front

We are going to discuss what we have learned in recent years, and what we want to do as a result. What we have to say will, of course, be general in nature.

We believe that it is now possible and necessary for the revolutionary strategy to enter a new stage in the imperialist centers.

First, we will outline some discussions, initiatives, and actual steps taken over the past two or three years to prepare the terrain from which to act.

An idea and a concept have taken form from which we can proceed. The first concrete steps indicate possibilities that would be effective: THE GUERILLA AND THE RESISTANCE UNITED IN A SINGLE FRONT.

Our vision is to bring together the options already explored in different areas and different scenes, often in a diffuse fashion and with only a vague underlying plan, so as to bring them to a new level of struggle, that is to say, to make them effective and strategic. If this is not done now, then all the new, productive, and open developments—the unprecedented developments—risk losing their clarity and degenerating.

WE SEE '77 AS A POINT OF TRANSITION FOR THE GUERILLA FROM THE FIRST STAGE TO THE NEXT.

The conflict between the guerilla and the state in '77 was the catalyst for a new political situation here. Within the dialectic of attack and reaction, the conditions of struggle were transformed. And just as the conditions have changed, so can and must the form of struggle change. After '77, nothing was as it had been before: not the state, not the left, not the role of the FRG in international politics, not the role of armed struggle in the center within the international class struggle. We made errors in '77, and the offensive was turned into our most serious defeat. We have some things to say about this.

The situation today—which developed as a result of the confrontation, and which can be seen more clearly now than was previously the case—shows that neither the errors nor the defeat were decisive.

In a fundamental way, the '77 offensive marked the end of the struggle we had been waging since '70 and forced us to make some decisions.

During the entire period of struggles that gave birth to the RAF and allowed it to grow we concentrated on one question of power: whether the prisoners, whom the state had used both to represent the RAF and

as a pretext for its own policies, would be freed. In the same way, more generally, the struggle to implement the urban guerilla concept, the question of whether the armed struggle could actually take root in the FRG, thereby opening up a revolutionary perspective, is fundamentally a question of power. This question has been at the heart of all the actions, skirmishes, manhunts, and media campaigns over the past years. That is why the government has reported our “collapse” hundreds of times. That is why most leftists’ whining has focused on the “hopelessness” of armed struggle. Isolation, the high security wings, and the Stammheim show trial were meant to destroy what had been built. And then there was ’77.

Today, we have no doubt that they decided to let Schleyer die, to risk a hundred people being blown up in Mogadishu, and to liquidate the Stammheim prisoners, because they really hoped and believed that they could be done with it once and for all, or at least for a while.

The unfolding dialectic that has changed everything reveals the nature of the guerilla and of the state, and how the struggle will unfold.

It almost worked, but the irony is that it actually created a situation in which we can continue the struggle in different and better conditions.

Throughout this final endeavor, in which there were no longer any limits—as a result of the suppression of the ’77 Offensive, whereby the state had us by the throat and intended to finish us off—the state had to openly use all its power to repress the entire spectrum of opposition, to repress all criticism, and to establish itself as a social system that cannot be questioned, with all the subtle ramifications that implies. This meant that in the autumn of ’77, all real opposition was faced with a new situation and new operating conditions, both in terms of the existing reality and in terms of the prospects for future struggle. This forced everyone to fundamentally redefine their relationship to power—or else renounce their identity.

At that point, the objective situation was reduced to the most basic issue. Subjectively, many people suddenly had the life-altering realization that if the guerilla had actually come to an end, then all of their hopes and dreams for a different life would have also disappeared. That there would no longer be any clear perspective. That there is only hope as long as there is struggle. That they wanted and needed the guerilla, and that our defeat was their defeat. Once you realize that the guerilla is necessary, the leap to a new consciousness is easy. If the guerilla struggle is all there is, making it material can only mean—on whatever level possible—situating yourself within the guerilla’s strategy.

This leap in consciousness was the personal, living moment within real people where the conditions of struggle here changed: IN

## FAVOR OF DEVELOPING A REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE.

There has been an effort over the past seven years to introduce into this political desert—where everything is fake, for sale, conditioning, lies, and falsehood—a spirit and a morale, to introduce a practice and a political orientation in favor of an irreversible disruption and destruction of the system. The guerilla. On the basis of ties to and identification with the struggles in South East Asia, in Africa, and in Latin America, an effort has been made to violently assert the existence of the guerilla and to root it here. What Che called the stage of survival and implantation, manifested itself here as the stage in which the concept was established, made headway, and was taken up—even if at a given point the existing illegal armed groups were destroyed. Above all, it is a concept that is violently imposed. In every regard. And in isolation. Not only against a repressive apparatus without historical precedent, but also against the ideas of people we would rather be cooperating with. In this one-dimensional landscape, which has existed for generations, the idea of liberation has difficulty breaking through thick layers of corruption, alienation, and emotional and psychological deformation to reach people's hearts and minds.

At this point, the question of whether to take up arms and struggle in the FRG and Western Europe has been resolved. It's obvious. That does not mean that the guerilla's future is guaranteed: that is never the case, but the existence of guerilla politics now constitutes the basis upon which the struggle will develop.

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

In the context of the international liberation struggle, the isolated guerilla struggles are seen to be a concrete factor in daily conflicts. It is now necessary to turn our full attention to the situation here and to proceed in an inverse movement, bringing resistance in the metropole to the front line of the international class war.

It is a strategy that has its roots here. In the existential hunger for a different life, in the overall experience of the imperialist center, and in the necessity of resistance here. AS A RESULT THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE METROPOLE IS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR ALONGSIDE THE STRUGGLES IN ASIA, AFRICA, AND LATIN AMERICA.

This means that from the moment one sides with the guerilla and the struggle for liberation within the anti-imperialist struggle, one has reached a radical turning point. To struggle within the context of an

open, strategic concept, where each person, based on the gravity of his or her own situation, based on his or her own history and subjective process, can arrive at the common goal of the destruction of the imperialist system and the revolutionary overthrow of society through concrete struggle in the context of the guerilla's politics. To be part of the revolutionary front here. This means that right from the start they share our objective of building the front in the center. That is what we mean by: struggle together in a front.

If one wants to, one can differentiate our line of action prior to '77 from that of today, in that, prior to '77, it was always a question of what would lead directly to armed struggle or what would prepare for this step, and now what matters is that the guerilla and the militant and political struggles unite as integral components of a developing strategy in the metropole.

What we are saying is that even if the illegal armed organization is at the heart 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 identify and carry out a conscious attack against the weak points in the imperialist center.

For us, the subjective side of the developments that came out of the dialectic of '77—the possibility of a front in the center—is essential. This remains the case. It will determine whether the struggle develops in the imperialist centers, which do not normally produce revolutionary conditions, but are objectively destructive and corrupt due to the way in which the crisis is managed and all social developments are turned into instruments of domination.

Obviously, nobody climbs to a higher level on their own. 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 liberation wars on the colonized continents culminated in the struggle of Vietnam's National Liberation Front, and their victory gave rise to a new historical stage of anticolonial national liberation struggles by peoples subjected to imperialism.

The effects of this historic breakthrough: the new strength of the emergent national states in international politics—the generalized economic, political, and social crises in the imperialist center—the rise, parallel to the liberation struggles, of the Soviet Union as a superpower equal to the United States—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. It

has thus destabilized the uneasy balance between imperialism and liberation. In other words, all around the world imperialism's instability produces a situation whereby it could slide into a final systemic crisis if it is defeated at any point in the global system or loses its dominance in some area—whether a strategic military position (Southern Africa, the Middle East), an economic component (such as oil, strategic mineral resources, or technological superiority), or the political domination of a geographic region (such as Central America or the Gulf).

Since Vietnam, the conflict has shifted from a confrontation between the center and the liberation struggles, the front and the hinterland, to a situation where the front line cuts across every sector and every country. Any sector, due to its specific point of integration and its unique significance in the overall system, could disrupt the balance of power—and, as a result, any sector could become a front in the liberation war.

To put it bluntly, imperialism must react by centralizing its power: the state, the unified structure of the U.S. chain of states, the reconstruction of its capacity for military, economic, and political action, and of its instruments of domination. In an attempt to get global developments back under control, they will intervene everywhere: in the existing struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in the emergent national states, in the East-West conflict, and in Western Europe, with the goal of using this generalized offensive to re-establish their hegemonic position.

Faced with united imperialist reaction, it is necessary for the anti-imperialist struggle to carry out parallel struggles on all fronts. They are all different sectors of a single front. And, as struggles that must be carried out side by side, each sector—and this includes the West European sector—will, on the basis of its own strengths, its own particular development, and its own specific current and historical conditions, be able to form an actual front that can shake imperialism.

This is why the dialectic of the '77 confrontation led to qualitatively new subjective conditions of struggle here and to the definitive integration of contradictions in the center into the development, the imperative, and the possibility of international class war. In this sense, it came at the right time.

In fact, this is also the context in which the state found itself in '77. Faced with the end of the U.S. chain of states' first stage of development, our defeat provided it with an opportunity to put on a show of force that was meant to show that it was not acting within the context of the national state, but on the level of the global counterrevolutionary project. In other words, it was acting as the key European power, which, in keeping with its function within the U.S. chain of states, will be politically

compelled to act both domestically and throughout Western Europe against all forms of resistance, so as to facilitate the international attack. But by doing this it has helped define the lines along which the decisive struggle will develop: the unified struggle of the West European states against the guerilla has made the concept of a West European guerilla front a reality, and, at the most basic social level, as a result of the FRG's laws and its history, a profound chasm has opened between society and the state, making the revolutionary front a realistic option here.

There is no longer any point in analyzing the internal changes here as isolated phenomena. As a result of their attitude and experiences, those who have been struggling for some time have already internalized the new situation and have accepted it as a turning point. What we are saying is that the system is faced with unprecedented fundamental opposition. Cold, without illusions, expecting nothing from the state. It's no longer about "changing the system" or an "alternative model" of the state. All of that seems completely absurd. That's over now—only with the end of the system can one imagine a life of any quality.

Imperialism offers no positive or meaningful future, only destruction. That is the key issue, the root of militancy in all areas of life.

This reality is experienced on the level of daily economic reality, through 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 where alienation and oppression express themselves through massive distortions and the destruction of any depth of individual thought, the feeling that one's very personality has been mutilated. The majority have lost all hope. Imperialism has perfected and systematized domination in its centers to such a degree that people feel powerless to resist. Skyrocketing suicide rates, people losing themselves in sickness, alcohol, tranquilizers, and drugs; these are reactions to the long history of defeats, hardship, and suffering—depoliticization to such a degree that people are no longer able to see the need for violent resistance.

But this profound misery also constitutes the profound existential basis for struggle and hatred. It is not a matter of short, spontaneous bursts of rage. This hatred has been building for years. This is the terrain upon which the revolutionary front in the metropole is now developing. Should the system finally be reduced to destruction and extermination, the resistance—whether it knows it or not—will prove to be the element of opposition that will become total resistance, both within single-issue struggles and beyond them. The unity of the revolutionary struggle will be both possible and necessary. For everyone who wants to struggle to bring about a break with the state and a revolt across

the spectrum of militant struggles, the first order of action must be to develop unity around a strategy of attack within the imperialist centers, through a practice that will itself inevitably create this unity.

#### THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT

Over the past two years, there have been numerous leaflets and actions with the slogan “a front with the RAF,” and we know that the need and the desire to achieve this cuts across all political issues. But there is still a very long way to go from this need, this desire, and this initial potential for a front, to the practical process of developing and organizing such a movement.

The front will not emerge automatically from common struggles and a proclamation. Such a proclamation and any mobilization that accompanied it will come to nothing if the practical aspects of this strategy—how it can be undertaken and how it can be effective—are not tackled more seriously. And not by us alone.

The front will not become a reality unless everybody, regardless of where they find themselves, makes it a priority to develop the process and practice necessary to unite the underground armed struggle and the aboveground militant resistance, as well as the methods, tactics, and structures that are necessary for them to determine the level of illegal activity and development that is possible for them. In this way, they will be able to make a conscious decision about their further integration into this strategic process.

#### THE FRONT REQUIRES THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL COORDINATION IN THE ATTACK AGAINST IMPERIALIST POWER—OTHERWISE IT IS MEANINGLESS.

While establishing the nucleus of this new guerilla structure over the past two years, we have found that this coordination springs up spontaneously quite easily and that it is powerful—both subjectively and objectively—in material terms, opening up possibilities for attack. On the other hand, we have found that it is difficult to maintain the momentum necessary for this strategy to transcend the boundaries between separate political initiatives, actions, and limited practical contexts. That is the roadblock that must now be dismantled.

It’s not a question of morale, enthusiasm, or activity. It means that, as a result of deciding to engage in this struggle, one must take realistic steps to determine how the system can actually be smashed and to determine one’s role in the process.

We have already had this experience ourselves, and we are ready to share it with those we know: the decisive moment in the breakthrough that underpins how far we’ve come is the struggle of those who have

begun to act within the framework of this strategy, or who want to participate as subjects within the framework of the anti-imperialist front. They have started to anticipate this within themselves and for themselves and to determine all political initiative and action from this perspective and toward this end. They think of everything they do from the perspective of the fighting front.

Since the first discussions in '79 about uniting the anti-imperialist struggle, the same obstacles have persisted within and between the anti-imperialist groups, preventing what would have otherwise been possible a long time ago: an active front. We can't get anywhere with phony struggles over the fetishization of militancy or pleas to establish "links with the masses." On the contrary, all expressions of support for us or efforts to discover some connection with us that only take the form of talk are useless. The fact is that all this will just result in the next simple step not being taken.

The front means more than just actions. The front—meaning the struggles that by their common objectives become a common struggle and develop into practical political unity—will take many forms in the West European center. At this point, the anti-imperialist front in the FRG—the militant attacks, militant projects coordinated in a united fashion to counter the imperialist strategy, political initiatives that mediate politics, that intervene in the actual resistance—is the structural and organizational struggle to establish the capacity to act. It is, at every point in its development, a struggle for an alternative and for the practical application of our discussions and declarations in the strategic process.

The front signifies more than building a legal structure around the guerilla. We have said before that there is no "legal arm of the RAF" and that none is possible. Sure, we have some contacts with people here and there, and this is also part of concrete guerilla politics. But it is only by specific, independent development in this area and by having common goals that one becomes part of the front. This is how division is broken down. This is the only way the struggle in this area can develop politically and achieve continuity and strength—and, as a matter of principle, self-determination and complete accountability are essential to each stage of the struggle for revolutionary politics in the West European center.

Debates that always remain at the same level, in which isolated perspectives confront professions of faith, the insular nature of isolated groups, the incapacity to take initiative; all of that disappears the moment one understands and internalizes the reality of the situation: the anti-imperialist front is as desperately needed as it is underdeveloped—but



it could develop a strong position in the West European center and has enormous potential in the context of the international liberation war.

**A SIGNIFICANT FIGHTING FRONT AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST STRATEGY IS THE MOST PRESSING GOAL.**

The extensive understanding of imperialism and its plans that pours forth in the form of papers—as well as the determination and the passion of the militant actions—all this will be in vain if it does not lead to the decision to forge the connections necessary for us to build the process together.

**STARTING WITH WHAT ALREADY EXISTS: THE FORM OF ACTUAL RESISTANCE AND THE CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE IN THE METROPOLE, THE POLITICAL, STRUCTURAL, AND PRACTICAL ELEMENTS AND LINES OF ATTACK AGAINST THE CORE OF IMPERIALIST POWER HERE: THE DISRUPTION OF THE WEST GERMAN STATE AND NATO WITH THE GOAL OF FURTHER DEVELOPING THE OFFENSIVE.**

The reality is that the anti-imperialist struggle is retreating 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 beginning of the crisis, or against their preparations or the first stages of their offensive. At that stage, the resistance was paralyzed by the disorientation and final collapse of the '68 left. The mobilization only began after the reactionary attack had been going on for some time and on all levels. As their offensive continued to unfold, a large, spontaneous resistance came into being, but anti-imperialism was not its overall goal. In the future, anti-imperialism must be present as a proactive and significant factor in discussions about and actions against the imperialist projects that now determine the course of history: the U.S. war strategy in Europe—the reactionary domestic state offensives—the international strategy of the imperialist chain of states to roll back the liberation movements and the emergent national states, as well as against the socialist states.

The fact of the matter is that it is an open question how history will unfold. U.S. imperialism—in its historic crisis, its existence threatened for the first time in forty years—has recourse to the most extreme means, and unless it is prevented from doing so it will use them if the system slides into an uncontrollable crisis. Given its potential for nuclear destruction, this certainly takes on a catastrophic dimension, which we, the oppressed and exploited of the world, have no reason to fear. Because it would mean the end of imperialism, and imperialism means the end of us. Faced with the possibility of nuclear destruction, our attitude is, first of all, that we do not fear it and, second of all, that we can and will prevent it through revolutionary war. Far more serious

than the possibility of nuclear war is the fact that U.S. imperialism is preparing a broad-based general offensive to re-establish itself as a world power, which will only be possible if it succeeds in expanding its domination. But it is possible to intervene against this offensive, and the anti-imperialist struggle in Western Europe will be decisive in determining whether imperialism succeeds in its efforts or whether the outcome is a leap forward for the worldwide liberation struggle against imperialism. The expansion of their domination is meant to occur without any major wars. It is to be brought about by making extermination a part of daily life, a part of living conditions, and through manipulation and repression—which will result in death and the destruction of humane living conditions for millions of people for a long time to come.

This is more or less certain, and will be for some time to come: given our relative weakness in the face of the power that controls almost everything here, we are in a situation where we cannot establish a front capable of threatening their power here. To resolve the generalized crisis at the social, socio-political, and politico-military level, they will be forced to adopt aggressive measures that will exceed the limits of what is politically acceptable in the metropole, the “tolerable limits”—democracy, well-being, internal peace—and they won’t be able to do so indefinitely if they are constantly confronted with anti-imperialist struggle and constantly unmasked in open confrontation, for this will sever the fine ideological thread holding the state and society together. The limits of what is politically acceptable have been historically determined for the imperialist centers in Western Europe. They became established pillars of the system in the struggles against the workers’ movement and the liberation wars, and they cannot be pulled down without provoking general social upheaval. This opens up the possibility of transforming the relative weakness of the anti-imperialist struggle in the West European center into a strong-point in the international struggle.

As to the imperialist system overall, its global restructuring project can only succeed if its plans for the imperialist center unfold relatively smoothly and quickly without encountering any serious, radical resistance. Given the international contradictions, any disruption caused by the anti-imperialist struggle here would prevent this project from succeeding. Imperialism would have to bring its massive power to bear to impose solutions at home and abroad, which would result in a unified international class war being waged around the world at a higher, more intense level. That is to say: it would bring about a renewed struggle to smash the imperialist system. This is the starting point from which we struggle. And it is our awareness of this opportunity, of our power, and of the option that only we here have—and, as a result, also an

awareness of our responsibility—that pushes us to establish and build the anti-imperialist front here.

THE REVOLUTION IN WESTERN EUROPE HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE OF THE GLOBAL CONFRONTATION.

In the context of the international class war, the imperialist offensive in Western Europe, which depends on the FRG, is essential to ensuring the functioning of the global system of domination and capitalist reproduction. On the other hand, from our point of view, the development of the front in the center to resist this is of vital importance in order to be able to counter the current tendency for the global liberation process to get derailed by the East-West contradiction, and to break through the constraints caused by developments at the level of the state in those countries that have achieved national liberation.

Western Europe is the point of intersection between East and West, between North and South, and between state and society. So the centers themselves are both the launching pads and the bases for restructuring projects. It is here that they must attempt to develop the necessary military power to pressure the socialist states and the national liberation struggles, as well as to develop the economic power necessary to get a grip on the internal waves of economic and social crisis. It is also from these bases that imperialism must intervene to dominate and integrate the emergent developing states. And—as a precondition for all of this—domestic political unity must be imposed; if there is not a consensus, there must at least be peace on the home front. In this sense, imperialism has been forced back to its centers. Using all its resources, it must offensively and aggressively impose the global reactionary project at all levels and with maximum force in the center.

Medium-range missiles, neutron bombs, conventional weaponry, concentration and centralization of capital, rationalization, plans for massive unemployment, turning humans into simple extensions of machines, the inevitable forceful shaping of energy policy based on its use as a weapon of war on the global market, the destruction of social structures to serve the interests of the police and big capital, exploitation of the means of subsistence, training programs functioning as factories, police, justice, prison, etc. are the initial blows in this militarily conceived offensive. This is the iron vice squeezing all sectors of society in the metropole, which long ago made it irrelevant whether or not we want the front in the center—the war has already begun. The only question today is whether there will be a revolutionary front to oppose the reactionary offensive.

This is what is behind the emergence of the anti-imperialist front in the center. Its significance is not just measured by whether or not it is able to stop this or that current imperialist project. Whatever it

achieves, it achieves as a fighting section within the international front. It is primarily on the basis of the overall conflict between imperialism and liberation that the power relationship is developed that will make social revolution here possible.

RESISTANCE TO THE IMPERIALIST MACHINE BASED HERE—AND THIS IS ALSO OUR DEFINITION OF GUERRILLA ACTION AND BUILDING THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT—IS BASED ON THE ATTACK AND ON BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT IN THE CENTER WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE.

The attack, which the overall situation demands, must occur here. On the world stage, the two blocs confront each other with weapons, locked in overkill mode, neither one willing to back down. The liberation movements have become states, and those that have not yet become states behave in a quasi-state fashion. International policy and international relations constitute the principal terrain for these liberation movements and emergent states. They are forced to function within the context of both the East-West contradiction, which reproduces itself within these countries, and the global market, in which and in opposition to which they are forced to pursue their development. At the same time they are forced to attempt to expand the power of the newly liberated states within international bodies, so as to create some room to maneuver for themselves. This development makes complete sense. It is both the expression of the strength achieved through the national liberation struggles and of the weakness that obliges them to continue to function within the imperialist-controlled state system.

In this situation, development in these countries creates a double-edged contradiction for the leadership of the emergent states. On the one hand, increasing misery, mass poverty, and underdevelopment call for radical solutions. On the other hand, the inevitable nature of the struggle to obtain the resources necessary to address these problems, resources over which the imperialist states have almost complete control, pushes them to come to terms with imperialism. This has the tendency to push them into ever-greater contradictions, which can easily end in divisive disasters, such as civil wars, famine, hopelessness, repression, and intervention. These contradictions are not of their making. They are above all the result of colonial history, from which imperialism continues to profit by exploiting the ruin it leaves behind when it is forced out of a country.

The guerilla and the militants in the metropole struggle today on the basis of a dynamic created by the liberation movements, and if a movement has existed here for thirty years, it is thanks to the struggles of these liberation movements, just as the situation there is significantly

conditioned by the fact that the struggle here is so underdeveloped.

There can be no way to destroy imperialism as long as there is no way to destroy imperialism's power, command structures, and productive centers here. In other words, politics must take forceful material form, becoming a significant factor in the international struggle, so as to achieve its goals and establish continuity, and to develop the will and the way forward that will put an end to the system. Only then will the revolutionary leap forward be possible. Imperialism will not collapse on its own. Nor will it collapse by being encircled and strangled from the outside. Unless the front develops here, the world will repeat the historical experience that has been fatal to class struggle in Europe and on the political level in the East-West conflict: irresolvable, bitter trench warfare. This militarily and politically aggressive imperialist system, with its highly developed technology and highly developed productive and organizational techniques, is intent on once again being the sole world power, by militarily opposing the desire of the Soviet Union and the socialist states to remain equal powers and by politically opposing the consciousness of the people of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. This is no longer feasible—but it does have sufficient political, military, and economic power to control, and thereby prevent, development in the countries that have achieved national liberation. It may also be powerful enough to undercut the socialist states by imposing an arms race and using the global market to disrupt their economies. And within the metropole, the state never stops trying to establish imperialist hegemony, using shows of force, police state tactics, and crisis management to keep a decaying society in its place.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

Steadfast resistance and revolutionary attacks tailored to conditions here are our only option—and it is an option that only we have—for opening up the way to put an end to the system—a way which achieves its purpose by destroying imperialist power.

As the situation in the metropole ripens, with the development of social production transforming into a source of extermination, the revolutionary struggle here, through its goals and its structure as a fighting front, points the way to a social future beyond the historical threshold of the existing system of states. In the current historical stage, in which the external boundary has been rolled back and the disintegrating imperialist system is in complete internal crisis, the metropole is ripe for change. It is, in fact, ripe for a radical struggle to overthrow social relationships and shift society to communist goals. In this context, life is not simply a series of transitional steps, nor is victory conceived of as

seizing state power, but rather as a seamless process of resistance that creates a counterforce and a transition to freedom.

REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS HERE IS THE STRATEGY THAT UNDERSTANDS EVERYDAY RESISTANCE AS A STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, AND AS A PART, A STAGE, AND A FACTOR WITHIN THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE, IN WHICH THE GOAL CAN ONLY BE REACHED BY COMBINED ACTION.

These politics have nothing to do with a global theory. They are not about creating one of those endless successions of ideological blueprints which one pretends will be realized at some future date. It can only be a real process. The route to utopia is a clear, long-term strategy—one might say it is a way of life—within which the strategic goal of destroying imperialist power is tied to a real and immediate transformation. The step-by-step process by which the front develops liberates both political terrain and individuals, destroying the state in the process—by building a counterforce, this process creates the necessary conditions for the politico-military offensive and establishes, as a material development, the renewal of fully human relationships between the combatants. Immediate transformation, liberated territory, and revolution are fully achieved in the process of resistance—and only as such do they become real. The revolutionary strategy here is simply a strategy against their strategy.

RESISTING THEIR STRATEGIC PLANS OR THEIR CONCRETE PROJECTS AND USING MATERIAL ATTACKS TO POLITICALLY DISRUPT IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD CREATES THE CONSCIOUSNESS NECESSARY FOR BOTH THE NATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT TO BLOCK THEIR PLANS BEFORE THEY CAN EXECUTE THEM.

A SIGNIFICANT FIGHTING FRONT HERE WOULD MATERIALLY DISRUPT THE CONSENSUS IN THE IMPERIALIST CENTER AND, THROUGH THIS DISRUPTION, WOULD MEDIATE A BREAKDOWN AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL DEPRIVING THE SYSTEM OF ITS LEGITIMACY AND APPEAL, BOTH OF WHICH IT REQUIRES TO REPRODUCE ITSELF ECONOMICALLY, AND TO REPRODUCE ITS SYSTEM OF MANIPULATION AND DESTRUCTION INTERNATIONALLY IN THE NEW STAGE.

SUCH A RADICAL SHIFT IN THE METROPOLE WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO PUT AN END TO IMPERIALIST POWER AND ITS LEGITIMACY IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE, WHO WOULD SEE THAT THE TIME WAS RIGHT TO ESTABLISH A FREE SOCIETY.

## REGARDING '77

The problem that we faced during the Schleyer kidnapping—given our concrete goal of liberating the prisoners—was that we did nothing to advance our political goals during the offensive, nor did we elaborate on the growing contradictions created by the overall crisis. Even though the action touched a nerve for the state, we did not react politically to the challenge we were presented with.

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

We knew that, at that point, any action would be carried out from a position of relative weakness, but we wanted to act anyway, because war is not a condition that *de facto* exists between us and them. It only exists if it is developed materially as a question of power. Since Stockholm, the question of the prisoners had become central to the conflict between the guerilla and the state, a central question within which the demand for the prisoners' freedom combined two issues and made them manifest: the relationship of the guerilla to its imprisoned comrades, and the role of this relationship in the struggle, as well as the importance of each individual to the whole—and of the power relations in general, given that the guerilla materially and directly challenged state power, as the attack intentionally aimed to create a political crisis by targeting Schleyer, one of the pillars of the state power structure (this was the only realistic option), thereby forcing a reaction that would expose the internal characteristics of their power structure by forcing them to react, while simultaneously creating divisions among them.

We hoped to force the SPD to decide whether to exchange these two figures who embodied the global power of West German capital in a way that no more than ten other individuals do: Ponto for international financial policy (revealing how all the German banks, especially his own Dresdner Bank, work to support reactionary regimes in developing countries, as well as the role of the FRG's financial policy as a tool in the institutional strategy to control the way in which European integration unfolds)—and Schleyer for national economic policy (the large corporations, concerted action, the FRG as an international model of social peace). They embodied the power within the state that the SPD, as the ruling party, must respect if it wishes to stay in power.<sup>1</sup>

Our action was meant to expose the contradiction that lies in the tension between the strategy of American capital, which has determined

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<sup>1</sup> A slightly different translation of this paragraph appeared in our first volume (478). The version presented here is more true to the German original.

the SPD's understanding of the state and all of its reactionary maneuvering in matters of domestic and foreign policy since 1945, and the banks and corporations, or, if you prefer, national capital. Certainly, national capital cannot formulate its own policy in the face of the hegemony of the American line—unless you count the narrow, provincial variations of a Kohl or an Albrecht, etc., or Strauß's grand plan, which he has been trying in vain to carry out for twenty years. But the strength of this national capital, which allows it to be competitive and to spread itself vertically within the overall capitalist structure, finds its natural expression in a consensus and in the consciousness of the national elites, so that Schmidt must represent it consistently at every level, both nationally and internationally.

The action's political escalation was defused primarily by the fact that the Ponto kidnapping fell through, and so one of the two pillars of the tactical and political plan was lost. But our critical error was in not completely reconsidering the action when the federal government let the first ultimatum pass, when it became obvious that they had abandoned Schleyer and were awaiting his death, which would allow them to rapidly consolidate their position. Given Schleyer's efforts to achieve a trade, we recognized that his connections and his influence weren't worth shit in the face of the united imperialist strategy.

All along they followed the tactical and psychological program of the BKA: avoid any official government decision and draw things out by pretending to negotiate, all in order to use police tactics to settle matters; prevent any public pressure with a news blackout; use Wishnewski's trips to so-called welcoming countries to impose an international "condemnation of terrorism," with the focus, in this case, on the prisoners. All of this objectively gave us the time and the opportunity to exploit the situation politically. For example, to immediately use the conversations with Schleyer 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 of a state of emergency, which would have signaled the end of any social-democratic policy through an open recognition of the state's crisis, which would have had to then be resolved at any cost.

In this situation, characterized by an escalation in which it became obvious that we were on the defensive, the Martyr Halimeh Commando decided to intervene in the growing crisis, in the way that they were able.

It was the first time a commando from a liberation movement intervened directly in the confrontation here and made the metropolitan



struggle their own. Much has been said about the tactical strategic error underlying 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 not to seek the solution in the metropole itself rather than using a young national state to intensify matters, because the decision should have been based on the balance of power here—because it concerned the prisoners, who embodied the struggle here, and because it was a question of isolating the FRG. In connection with an action in the metropole, the goal of which was to polarize the metropole and create a break between the people and the state, the method used—hijacking an airplane—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, thereby destroying the goal of revolutionary action.

The incorrect thinking behind the action that played against the commando, and which the federal government could count on in its planning, started with the fact that it was obvious that the commando would do whatever it could, and would continue to negotiate as long as it saw any hope of the FRG freeing the prisoners. This played against the commando, allowing the government to develop its strategy. As for the SPD, it chose to resolve matters by carrying out a massacre, as it had in Stockholm, because it is always ready to discard its popular image when American interests—stable rule in the center—are attacked. At the time, Schmidt said, “It was impossible to know if it would result in an acceptable outcome.” It amounted to a decision in favor of a military solution at a time when a guerilla victory in the FRG, the key country for the reactionary integration of the West European states, would have meant a decisive setback for imperialist plans for reconstruction. It was a leap forward for the reactionary counter-offensive to consolidate its internal security mechanisms in Western Europe. But with Stammheim and Mogadishu, a centerpiece of social democratic policy, the hidden war, was unmasked. The imperialist state appeared shamelessly and openly reactionary; it no longer shied away from comparisons with its fascist past, but embraced them. The “desert foxes” of Mogadishu were to be an example for German youth. But at the same time, the political weakness of the metropolitan states, the internal fragility of the entire structure that appeared so powerful from the outside, was made obvious as never before.

Red Army Faction  
May 1982