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The Prisoners Statement Regarding the End of the Hunger Strike

Mid-February 1985

We are speaking to those who have struggled with us during the hunger strike, those who have made our demands their own. We want to explain to you how we arrived at our decision to now break off the hunger strike. It appears to us, and this was the reason for our decision, that there is a new point from which we can develop the struggle together.

We broke our hunger strike on the February 1st, because our shared development regarding the prisoners' level of struggle around their living conditions had reached an endpoint; the strike had ushered in a qualitative leap in the revolutionary struggle in the NATO states in the West European context. The politics of the metropolitan guerrilla have achieved the breakthrough anticipated by the last five years of struggle. From our point of view, conditions have developed that did not exist when we began the hunger strike. The breakthrough in the West European dimension of revolutionary practice forced the imperialist chain of States to establish a united "strategic" reaction. The reality of this united arrangement was immediately apparent following Action Elisabeth von Dyck¹, with the intervention of the US Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the NATO governments. The objective behind this is, according to the line presented by Schultz², prevention and retaliation.

For us a process had begun, on the basis of the changing situation, which led us to a new assessment and a new decision regarding our hunger strike. It was clear, on the basis of this line of united imperialist reaction, that they would make the prisoners the first target of their attack, because they have us and, from their perspective, the prisoners embody the politics. After the action of the Commando Patsy O'Hara³ we decided to break off the strike to prevent them from using an old strategy (dead prisoners versus the political leap forward) to achieve their objective once again. That was, at the time, with 3 prisoners on the edge, only a question of hours.

At this point, the strategic breakthrough becomes the sharpest means for the prisoners. Whether it is necessary to die to be victorious is no longer a question in keeping with the scale of things. The demand for association was suddenly replaced by a new reality; the

¹ Action Elisabeth von Dyck - in January 85, Action Directe, a French anti-imperialist guerrilla group, which released a common strategy paper with the RAF in January 85, killed NATO General Audran. The killing was claimed by the Commando Elisabeth von Dyck. Elisabeth von Dyck was a RAF member who was shot to death by the police in May 1979.

² George Schultz - US Secretary of State.

³ Commando Patsy O'Hara - the name of a RAF Commando that shot Ernst Zimmermann, a key military-industrial complex industrialist on February 1, 1985. Patsy O'Hara was an Irish National Liberation Army prisoner of war who died on hunger strike for political status in May 1981, the same hunger strike that claimed ten other lives, including that of Bobby Sands.

West European guerrilla versus the unified imperialist rationale. That is to say, not fulfilling the demand for association has become, for the imperialist states, as important as the stationing of missiles is on another level. They must, in opposition to the will of the majority of the people, and regardless of whether or not there is a mass rebellion, establish a threshold below which no NATO State can remain. The imperialist system is forced to raise questions, which, particularly in the FRG⁴, given that a shift in the entire international relationship could occur here, go to the core of power, to the unified State rationale.

An example of their substantial weakness, based on the dialectic of struggle, is that they were obliged to expose themselves, to expose the power structure with which we must deal. The speech Schultz made about the three centers of the revolutionary struggle in the coming years - West Europe, the Middle East and Latin America – Mitterand⁵ speaking of "an international strategic struggle;" Soares⁶, Spadolini⁷, etc, the statement of the NATO ambassador; they all show that it is, in terms of action, a united system.

Our strike was to be made an object lesson, an example of their readiness to exercise power. At that point, we, the prisoners, couldn't win. The West European guerrilla, for whom the strike was part of the confrontation, and who tried to respond to it, can only lose politically if none of our material goals can be reached with these means, if more of us die and the meaning of life in this objective situation becomes even harder to comprehend. For us, to stop now emphasizes the political victory; a victory for the unity of the guerrilla, the resistance and the prisoners. That the strike broke through the political wall around the prisoners so quickly, that there was strong solidarity here and internationally, that the facts of our real situation became known rebounded against the opposition's line; for a period of time everything was perfectly clear, because they could only respond to the political situation with naked power. This is their problem with the Kontaktsperre⁸; they want it, but they don't want to risk a still broader mobilization and a discussion that they will not be able to suppress. The efforts of the SPD⁹ bloodhounds run aground on exactly this issue; it creates a consciousness about the State's war against the prisoners that no longer leaves them with a free hand. After this victory, the NATO decision was that the political cost, internally and externally, was no longer an issue. On January 27th, Kinkel said to the lawyers, "The federal government will accept the consequences."

Regarding the second wall, the material wall, we have not, with this strike, in the concrete political situation, gotten through it. We have not, with our demand for association, changed anything. We will struggle around this later and, as of now, on different bases; on the basis of unified resistance, a practical and political experience we have won together; on the basis of an internationalism that is such that we, the prisoners, can struggle at this level, that is to say, a concept of an international class war of which

⁴ FRG — Federal Republic of Germany, West Germany.

⁵ François Mitterand - at that time President of France.

⁶ Soares — at that time President of Portugal.

⁷ Spadolini – at that time Minister of Defense of Italy.

⁸ Kontaktsperre - a German law that allows the authorities to deny political prisoners all contact with the outside world, including lawyers' visits, letters and all forms of media.

⁹ SPD - the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

we are part; and on the basis of winning material breakthroughs in the prison statutes whenever the balance of power makes this possible.

**For the prisoners of the RAF and the resistance
Mid-February 1985**