

## A Statement Regarding '77

We have to talk about '77 again here, specifically about the political strategy behind the first phase of armed struggle in which the attacks occurred and how new conditions for revolutionary politics developed out of this conflict. We also have to say a few things about what happened when we took Schleyer captive and demanded the prisoners in exchange for him.

Following the arrests in '72 and the Stockholm action, the social democratic state hoped for a realignment that would put an end to the guerilla's complete negation of the capitalist system and the rupture it represents. The guerilla was to remain an incident involving a couple of guys, historically connected to the situation around the Vietnam War, and perhaps to a critique of the old sterile antifascism—as if it was intended to be the latest form of treason—to prevent the possibility of revolutionary struggle here from serving as a reference point. In '76, we had arrived at the goal of deepening the guerilla project and further developing an understanding of the rupture in the metropole by resuming the struggle—setting the revolutionary process in motion and making the rupture irreversible. The goal of restructuring the guerilla in '77 was connected to the prisoners' struggle.

The ongoing social democracy was an external condition under which we struggled in the '70s; against the strategy of the SPD, which had broken the back of proletarian revolution many times since 1914—which had disarmed the working class in the face of fascism—which after '45, guided by U.S. capital, was again inserted into the class as a pillar of support for capital—which, as the modern form of imperialist rule, institutionalized all social contradictions, political struggles, and autonomous movements. It was against these political conditions that we carried out the first RAF attacks. These actions were part of a practice that destroyed the “objective unity of the bourgeoisie,” that recreated the conditions for class consciousness, and developed the strategic political-military struggle.

The other condition: after the consolidation of the October Revolution, the national class struggle failed to develop anything that correctly clarified the current conflict between the proletariat and the capitalist system or showed how to overthrow it. Capital had further internationalized itself.

And regarding the different forms of colonization of people in the south and in the metropole, different realities were shaped to separate them socially and politically. So the relationship to oppression in the

metropole was stabilized for decades through the internationalization of production, and was politically sealed by social democracy and the unions limiting the labor movement to purely economic struggles. This relative stability was disrupted by the Vietnamese liberation struggle. First of all, because this successful struggle for national self-determination and social development was connected to worldwide change, it created barriers to capital. But more importantly, the Vietnamese liberation struggle changed political conditions. An aspect of this decolonization was that it simultaneously involved confronting U.S. imperialism, and for that reason this war revealed the totality and the unity of the entire imperialist system, for the first time since the consolidation of the October Revolution. That facilitated a break with the long history of revisionism here. Vietnam transformed the worldwide revolutionary process from one of separate national class struggles into an increasingly unified international class struggle, uniting the struggles on all fronts. Since then this has been the context within which all of the struggles confronting the capitalist system occur. They differ only as to the level of the concrete conditions in which and under which they are conducted.

At the beginning of '77, the question here was whether things could continue to advance or whether they would suffer further reversals. Following the military solution to the guerilla struggle that was used against the commando in Stockholm, all those who chose not to leave were also choosing to not allow the revolutionary strategy to once again be pissed away in the states of the metropole. It was a decision to oppose the Social Democrats' strategic intent, which was to annihilate the guerilla with depoliticization, rabble-rousing, and repressive normality, using mass control and modern fascism to their full potential. Brandt said that the counterstrategy must redevelop "society's immune system," something that social democracy represents more than almost anything else. As such, the most important recommendation the U.S. counterstrategy could offer the SPD was that they bury the Stammheim prisoners as deep as possible. With this goal, the state's openly liquidationist line determined the speed and intensity with which the guerilla had to reorganize itself and develop its offensive.

The prisoners' struggle had a political objective of its own. It arose from a contradiction which clarified both the political preconditions for the rupture as well as the depth it could achieve here. At the same time, '77 was the point where the first phase of the guerilla struggle ended and where the political objective of this phase, the rupture in the metropole, was thereby established.

By taking Schleyer prisoner, we confronted the FRG state with its problem of legitimacy—using this bureaucrat from the Third Reich and

its successor state, a state which was entirely shaped from the outside and imposed internally. The action confronted the FRG with this problem of legitimacy—the historical conditions for the overthrow of this system were ripe and its back was to the wall—because the negotiations forced it to acknowledge its adversaries. And the action confronted the federal government with the antifascism that to some degree already existed in Western Europe, and which was not just a historical factor, but was being produced anew as a reaction to the FRG's new and pervasive claims to power. Schmidt said in parliament, “The hope that memories of Auschwitz and Oradour<sup>1</sup> would begin to fade in countries outside of Germany will not be fulfilled. If a terrorist is shot by us... we will face questions that other nations don't have to deal with.”

In fact, the old antifascism here collapsed without resistance, because it was propped up by a left that had waited thirty years for Strauß so they could scream about fascism, but have not to this very day caught on to the fact that everything that the CDU tried to do they learned from the SPD. And in Western Europe outside of Germany, it lost its strength to the degree that it oriented itself toward an impending revolution in one country and treated this as typical of Western Europe. This relationship to power consisted of the weakness of the old antifascism at a point when the new antifascism emerging from the anti-imperialist struggle was not yet adequately developed. This allowed the state to achieve its goal of waging war against the enemy within—“civilization or barbarism,” hyper-criminality—and to resolve the situation militarily, in keeping with Schmidt's imposed dictum, at least during those weeks: society could not be permitted to debate the guerilla's politics.

Because social democracy has its historical roots in the betrayal of the working class, they are particularly sensitive to the problem of legitimacy faced by the capitalist system. This was illustrated by the conflicts within the Crisis Management Team. The SPD wanted to handle it as a state of emergency, without actually declaring such a thing. Wehner<sup>2</sup> insisted that people stop talking openly about a state crisis. The CDU/CSU was prepared to drop this line—for example, the CSU proposed allowing the prisoners to go free and then declaring a state of emergency to smash the mobilization that the situation had provoked. Or Rebmann's idea to institute martial law and shoot the imprisoned guerillas. Schmidt relied on the effectiveness not of traditional fascism, but of the institutional variety. He too wanted to use the prisoners

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1 On June 10, 1944, the Waffen-SS destroyed the French village of Oradour-sur Glane, killing all 642 of its inhabitants.

2 Herbert Wehner was a prominent SPD politician.

as hostages, but legally, with the Contact Ban law. He too wanted a military solution, but with the police waging the war, accompanied by the construction of the necessary ideological superstructure. The goal was the same. As a result, everything was focused on the prisoners, because they couldn't get at the commando.

On September 8, 1977, the Crisis Management Team allowed *Die Welt* to demand that Rebmann's plan be carried out. On September 10, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published the same thing as reflecting a discussion within the CSU *Land* group, which wanted a prisoner shot at half-hour intervals until Schleyer was released. A day later, *Frühshoppen*<sup>3</sup> demanded the introduction of bloody torture, noting that the guerilla groups in Latin America had been defeated in that way. The next day, *Spiegel* provided a platform for the CSU's Becher<sup>4</sup> and Zimmermann to express their longing for the deaths of the Stammheim prisoners. On September 13, the same idea was put forward by the SPD through Heinz Kühn,<sup>5</sup> but in a more delicate way: "The terrorists must be made to understand that the death of Hanns Martin Schleyer will have grave consequences for the fate of the violent prisoners they are hoping to free through their disgraceful actions." Next, there was a debate regarding the pros and cons of the death penalty, which ranged from the Catholic Church to *Stern*. In the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Strauß demanded a pogrom against the prisoners, because "then the police and the justice system wouldn't have to bother with this anymore." On October 16, throughout the media the BKA psychological warfare line was once again advanced, laying the groundwork for the operation on the seventh floor. The following day, using state security material, *Spiegel* claimed Andreas was the mastermind behind our action. Any journalist could easily see that this material had been manipulated. That same evening, on *Panorama*,<sup>6</sup> Golo Mann<sup>7</sup> demanded that the prisoners be treated as hostages and shot. This was all part of the Crisis Management Team's public show, the preparatory propaganda. Rebmann served to connect this public line to the operational possibilities arising from the vacuum created by the Contact Ban.

The Federal Republic's decision to adopt the hard line is best understood in light of the role this operation played in the global reconstruction

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3 *Frühshoppen* (Brunch) is a German TV news show.

4 Walter Becher, a former Nazi, worked his way through a number of extreme right-wing parties in the postwar period before settling into the CSU.

5 Heinz Kühn (SPD) was, in 1977, the president of North Rhine-Westphalia.

6 *Panorama* is a German TV news program.

7 Golo Mann was a German historian and philosopher.

of imperialist politics for counterrevolutionary revival. The FRG's function was to take the lead in the reactionary restructuring of Western Europe, in order to establish a continental police state. Part of the price the Federal Republic had to pay to prevent any resurgence of revolutionary politics in Western Europe's power center was the collapse of the old social democratic ideology and policies. All of this was connected to the question of the prisoner exchange. At the state funeral, Scheel said that if the flame wasn't immediately snuffed out then it would spread like wildfire all around the world, and freeing the prisoners would have been its starting point. Because of this setback, over the next years we had to develop new ways to struggle alongside the prisoners.

The Federal Republic's decision to refuse the exchange was only made possible by mobilizing every conceivable form of institutional fascism, and by the BKA's political putsch—in short, by transforming the political situation into a military situation. Partly this was accomplished through the manipulation of parliament and the Federal Constitutional Court, partly by turning the media into official public organs, and partly by the news ban, supposedly necessary for Schleyer's safety. Regarding this, in the September 14 video, Schleyer himself said that for his own protection he wanted contact with the public. After that, the Crisis Management Team made decisions that were contrary to his interests, they acted primarily to prevent negotiations and to prevent any public debate that could have interfered with their preferred solution. In any case, after five weeks of nonstop rabble-rousing, a public opinion poll showed that as many people supported the exchange as opposed it. But there was only one possible way to quickly resolve the crisis, given that the federal government had lost its capacity to act: the NATO solution. The Contact Ban was the means by which the Crisis Management Team gained control of the situation—as well as giving Rebmann all of the options he required. This was never meant to protect Schleyer, but rather to protect the Crisis Management Team's plan.

With '77, the form and the content of the FRG state became one and the same. Its political content: a post-Nazi state and an anti-communist bulwark within the NATO structure. Its form: the dictatorial heart of NATO democracy, the national security state, the state that exterminates people to protect them from themselves. Given its raw unmediated structure, right from the beginning it was obvious that in the FRG proletarian politics would require autonomous struggle, which is to say, illegally organized armed struggle. However, it was not just the old structures and forms that had been renewed, but fascism itself. The SPD had already proceeded so far with its process of institutionalization that the officially declared state of emergency had been made redundant.

Just as in Stammheim in '75, it wasn't presented as an issue of high treason, because that charge contained too much political substance. In '74, Brandt said, "Since the Social-Liberal Coalition has been in power, basic precautions have been taken to secure the state internally." Beyond legalizing counterinsurgency, he was referring to the program that party partisan Herold had already envisioned in '68: fascism in an historical era of automation and data processing, and the institutional penetration of society, so as to paralyze it—fascism that no longer requires mass mobilization or ideologically motivated fascists, but only bureaucrats and technocrats in the service of the imperialist state. In the emergency situation of '77, its entire potential was mobilized. Behind the fictional separation of powers and parliamentary procedure lies the *Maßnahmestaat*,<sup>8</sup> the real power structure where police and military bodies control the analysis—given their "privileged access to information" (Herold)—and in so doing shape policy.

The extraordinary part of the crisis structure—the Crisis Cabinet, etc.—was disbanded following the military solution. Yet this was no mere ad hoc repressive deployment on the part of the state in response to a particularly intense guerilla offensive. Rather, it is the unfolding of a process that Marighella already identified in the experience of the Latin American urban guerilla: when faced with resistance that calls its very existence into question, the state transforms the political situation into a military situation. That is what is happening today on an international level. Imperialism is everywhere losing its capacity to resolve problems politically, so it is militarizing its strategy. From imperialism's point of view, for society overall, this means that state security—with its centers, its special sections, its psychological campaigns, etc.—provides significant structural support for its rule. In this way, it also modifies the state's ideology and carries out the projects for "domestic peace" that were developed primarily by the Social Democrats, in order to go on the offensive to destroy all political expressions of social antagonism. The state acknowledges the rupture that the guerilla here originally struggled to create. At the end of '77, Vogel<sup>9</sup> bemoaned the "irreparable rupture." This was the defeat they had suffered, which tarnished the image they had cultivated with their domestic and foreign

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8 The *Maßnahmestaat* (literally: state of measures) is a term usually applied to the Nazi state. It has no adequate translation into English and is commonly used in its German form. See William Treharne Jones, "Germany: Prospects for a Nationalist Revival," in *International Affairs*, Royal Institute of International Affairs 46, no. 2 (April 1970): 316-322.

9 Bernhard Vogel (CDU) was, from 1976 to 1988, the president of the *Land* of Rhineland-Palatinate.

policies, and which also brought about the degradation of their ideology, opening up possibilities for the left to act.

These changes were not the result of '77 alone. They were the result of a process set in motion by the first RAF attacks and the prisoners' hunger strikes, as well as in response to those who opted to continue the struggle after '77. In this regard, the actions in the autumn of '81 were particularly important. Following '77 and continuing to this very day, there have been attempts to reverse the rupture. Following the neutralization of liberalism and antifascism by the events of '77, this position is today occupied by a new left that situates itself somewhere between "the guerilla and the state" and attempts to lay its own claim on parliamentary action. However, this left is of no importance. Not only because the political-economic crisis leaves reformism with objectively even less room to maneuver than in the seventies, but also because what is required here is a left that is beyond their reach, that has been politicized to grasp the meaning of '77, and that can find its bearings in a situation where the state targets any fundamental opposition. This resistance must be grounded in an understanding that reformism here is not limited by the economy but by politics, which must in turn be targeted by revolutionary activity.

The rupture in the metropole remains irreversible. Kissinger also speaks about this shift in relationships, which occurred in less than a decade, characterizing the SPD as still pursuing the "idea of domestic peace" in '76, but noting that by '84, "On both sides of the Atlantic we are threatened by domestic politics overshadowing the worldwide strategy." That is his automatic response to the fact that imperialism, with its global project to perpetuate the capitalist system, is not only limited by the liberation struggles in the South, but is also held back by the front within.

Christian Klar  
Stammheim, December 4, 1984

# Strategic Thoughts

In the Front Paper we state that the revolutionary strategy is the strategy against their strategy. With this we have proceeded forcefully, basing ourselves on our own situation, and on that which has characterized it since '77: the military offensive from which imperialism hopes to emerge as a world system.

It is a definition of fundamental importance, because war—the concept upon which our reality is based—is a concept that every revolutionary movement requires in order to be able to struggle. “War is the key,” Andreas once said in this regard—the key to arriving at a practical perspective, as is the case now—yes, historically, we really are at the highest stage of imperialism—the key to finding a path to social revolution. As such, it is the way we can struggle against the conditions we face.

We say that proletarian internationalism—the subjective connection between existing combatants and the strategy for those who collectively and consciously take up the goal of worldwide liberation and who oppose the imperialist project to establish global fascism—is the way those who desire a final fundamental revolution and prefigure this and make it concrete through attacks, advance to destroy and wear down the system in every sector, together in a front. That is the strategic goal and the political objective that determines our practice; internationally and authentically, on the basis of the specific experience and function of the metropolitan guerilla.

The RAF's struggle was always based on both the global balance of power and the conflict in the metropole; the war is not just about escalating things in the most developed sectors, rather it is the reality of the entire imperialist system, and will be until victory. For us it is a question of revolutionary warfare and how we can bring it to a level that is powerful enough to actually bring this system to its breaking point: as international class war in the form of a protracted struggle.

The goal determines the brutality with which imperialism conducts its war on every level and all fronts. They see it as the decisive battle, because, following the breach opened by Vietnam, they felt that the only way to secure their power would be to completely eliminate all sources of antagonism—the guerilla, the liberation movements, the states that have achieved national liberation, and eventually the socialist states in the East. We are now midway through that phase. They are launching attacks everywhere: stationing missiles and waging war against the guerilla in Western Europe, attempting to stamp out the Palestinian revolution, Grenada, El Salvador, the bloody wars against Nicaragua,



Mozambique, Angola, and Cambodia.

They have not yet completed their unification into a homogenous counterrevolutionary bloc—as they must if they are to politically survive the military offensive—nor is there any guarantee that they will. However, it is also true that the revolutionary struggles, facing different conditions and having achieved different levels of development, have already felt the effects of the offensive meant to prevent them from achieving their goals. The *New Jersey*<sup>1</sup> carried out the heaviest bombing since the Vietnam War in an effort to secure an American victory. Following this attack, an American official said the objective was to make Lebanon look like a lunar landscape. To do this, they withdrew from El Salvador, where they had recently set up base with the objective of crushing the civilian population and isolating the guerilla. The entire machine, which is constantly attempting to perfect this extermination policy, reaches its limit at the boundary established by simultaneous struggles and a balance of power that, as a result, is constantly shifting. The smooth unfolding of their power project is shattered by this dialectical reality.

The conditions of struggle in each sector have a direct impact on all of the other sectors, because the conflict has fundamentally changed. Vietnam won. The guerilla has politically implanted itself in Western Europe. Developments in the Middle East have taken on new and more powerful dimensions as part of the broader Arab revolution. In Latin America—where for ten years they installed military dictators everywhere, because the guerilla had a mass base—they are now confronted with new struggles and with people who will no longer accept easy solutions, who show no fear in the face of fascism, because the experience of fascism has shaped their resistance. And the Nicaraguan revolution broke the grip of reaction throughout the continent. Nothing is dead and gone. Fifteen years ago the Tupamaros explained how they had drawn on Che's experience to develop the urban guerilla concept, and now two years ago Salvador Carpio<sup>2</sup> made it clear that the FMLN had learned from the Tupamaros' struggle and built upon what they had learned. There is no single international strategy, but there is a learning process based on the different experiences and political developments, and it is clear that in their perspectives and relationships the combatants see every attack as a practical building block in a strategy to open up new possibilities.

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1 The U.S. battleship *New Jersey* bombarded Beirut in 1983.

2 "Marcel" Salvador Cayetano Carpio was a co-founder of the FPL (*Fuerzas Populares de Liberación*—Popular Forces for Liberation), the largest of the five guerilla groups that made up the FMLN in El Salvador.

The military strategy is now the unifying factor and the basis for imperialist restructuring. They are pushing Western Europe and Japan to the forefront, because they need a unified system for their global offensive. That was a lesson they learned from Vietnam, and they are now making the connection: wars of aggression and intervention have ramifications for their own society—they serve to mobilize people. There is no place left where they have any hope of legitimacy or support. The formation of the unified system depends on their keeping the “political costs” under control, creating legitimacy based solely on the military strength of the bloc as a whole, and confronting their own society with this power. That is why the invasion of Grenada followed a request from the Caribbean states, why the NATO intervention in Lebanon took place under the rubric of “multinational peacekeeping,” and why right to the end Weinberger<sup>3</sup> tried to involve ten different states in order to avoid a troop withdrawal. What they hope to achieve is a flexible structure of military commandos in the core imperialist states—the United States, the FRG, Great Britain, France, and Japan—that can tailor its response to the style and requirements of the regional states concerned. The German Association for Foreign Policy,<sup>4</sup> which produces studies in association with the Office of the Federal Chancellor,<sup>5</sup> the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Defense, demanded this at the beginning of '81. Board members range from Stoltenberg, Weizsäcker, and Schmidt<sup>6</sup> to Zahn, Beitz, and Vetter,<sup>7</sup> all of whom—industry, political parties, and trade unions—are concerned with making the necessary internal preparations. With the stationing of missiles, the formation of the French and British RDF<sup>8</sup> units, and the integration of Japan into NATO's military strategy, the military core has come together.

For them, the offensive has thus become a decisive battle, and the reformist version—social democracy and covert warfare—is unfolding on all levels. The SPD's ambitious project to institutionally bury all

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3 Caspar Weinberger was, at the time, secretary of defense for the Republican Reagan administration in the United States.

4 *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*.

5 *Bundeskanzleramt*.

6 Gerhard Stoltenberg (CDU) was federal minister of defense from 1982 until 1989. Richard von Weizsäcker (CDU) was president from 1984 until 1994.

7 At the time, Joachim Zahn (CDU) was the chairman of Mercedes-Benz. Berthold Beitz was a prominent industrialist in the mining sector and a member of the German Olympic Committee. Heinz Oskar Vetter (SPD) was chairman of the *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* (German Association of Trade Unions).

8 Rapid Deployment Forces are specialized military units that receive advanced training and armaments.

antagonism has not succeeded in any way; not internally between the state and society, and not internationally. Having promised to guarantee the internal stability of Model Germany by nationalizing the conflict between capital and labor (concerted action, intergroup mediation, the trade unions as equal members of economic associations), they found themselves confronted not only with an economic crisis, but also with the politics of class struggle—a result of the effects the national liberation struggles had on the metropole. In June '68, Schiller<sup>9</sup> congratulated the government and business for the collaboration between the state, industry, and the trade unions that had prevented “any social conflict from spreading to the workforce in the FRG, as occurred in France.” They thought that with Brandt and the amnesty they had succeeded in depoliticizing the working class and reintegrating the students who had been criminalized, bringing them back into the orbit of the state.<sup>10</sup> But the politicization achieved by the front's struggle was stronger than that.

Algeria, Vietnam, South Yemen, Che, and the Tupamaros re-established something that had been declared long dead in the metropole: a new internationalist consciousness and with it a perspective for struggle here—a struggle in a front with them. Later Sartre would call it the decisive political discovery in the West, and that was true. And so the armed struggle began in Germany, and under different conditions in Italy. Since that time, the social revolution has been taken up as part of the objective pursued by the movements for national autonomy, such as ETA and the IRA.

More than anything, the first RAF action threatened the SPD's institutional strategy for domestic peace, and with it the political preconditions for the smooth integration of the West European states. For this reason, as well as the fact that reformist politics in this state have only a very narrow field of maneuver, to get back on track the antagonism had to be liquidated—that is why the reaction against us sought to exterminate us. This contradiction eventually broke the SPD's back. They couldn't resolve it. The only way they could have had victory over the guerilla would have been if we had given up the struggle. The confrontation with revolutionary politics made the reintegration and

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<sup>9</sup> Karl Schiller (SPD) was federal minister of economics from 1966 until 1972, and federal minister of finance in 1971 and 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Willy Brandt was elected chancellor as part of the first Social-Liberal coalition, in 1969; in 1970 the government decreed an amnesty for those arrested for minor infractions in the context of the APO; 5,868 people were affected. (Jutta Ditfurth, *Ulrike Meinhof: Die Biographie* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2007), 266.) See also Moncourt and Smith, 41-42, 44.

depoliticization of the '68 left irrelevant. It exposed the SPD's institutional strategy for what it was: war tailored to the metropole. It was not Model Germany as the most advanced form of imperialist rule that was exported, but rather the brutality of the national security state. In Italy this is known as "Germanization," and it is what the SPD state has been known for around the world since '77—revolutionaries know Germany as imperialism's most advanced tactical position, while reactionaries know it as the state with the most modern and pervasive repressive machinery. It is no longer the Israelis who are training anti-guerilla units everywhere, but instructors from the GSG—from Fort Bragg to Thailand. Their plan to impose peace along the North-South front line—using money and counterinsurgency—had just as little success in masking the contradictions. The hunger and hardship are too great and the gap between rich and poor is too wide and too deep. Last year, when Kreisky<sup>11</sup> proposed a new Marshall Plan like the one after '45, Shultz<sup>12</sup> responded that he was naïve, because the conditions that had existed in devastated Europe were in no way comparable to the poverty in the poor countries.

The U.S. magazine, *Foreign Policy*,<sup>13</sup> wrote that the imperialist solution to the crisis—i.e., neverending debt and dependency on the political dictates of the core states—has set the development of entire continents back forty or fifty years. Brandt's North-South Commission no longer talks about a global partnership or a new world economic order to harmonize conflicting interests, but about the need to rescue the banking system. There is nothing left to harmonize between the different parties, because it is clear there can be no new world economic order without a worldwide revolution. There is only one solution to the economic crisis, a political solution: the destruction of the system of hunger and despair, repression and exploitation. In the long run social democratic intervention has been unable to establish a foothold anywhere, no matter what form it has taken—Bahr's<sup>14</sup> attempt in '76 to use cash payments to shift the liberation movements away from military struggle, or the attempt to use the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*<sup>15</sup> to build

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11 Bruno Kreisky was, at this time, the Chairman of the SPÖ (Austrian Social Democratic Party) and the chancellor of Austria.

12 George Shultz was, at this time, the U.S. secretary of state.

13 *Foreign Policy* is the official organ of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think tank based in Washington, DC.

14 Egon Bahr (SPD) was, at that time, minister for economic affairs. A former journalist, he is credited with having crafted Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.

15 The *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung* (Friedrich Ebert Endowment) is a German social democratic think tank and charity organization.

up figures who could emerge as the “democratic opposition” following a successful revolution, or else the pressure brought to bear on the new national states, i.e. financial aid in exchange for an anticommunist foreign policy. Their ideology was shattered by the reality of war. The conflict has spread too far.

They also failed on the East-West front line. The United States experienced national revolutions in South East Asia, Latin America, and Africa in the sixties, and a quick victory against the U.S.S.R. ceased to be possible because they too had the atom bomb, forcing another shift in U.S. foreign policy. At first the objective was to defeat the liberation wars in order to get a free hand with which to force the U.S.S.R. into a conventional war that would remain below the atomic threshold, so as not to provoke a counterattack. This gave rise to the policy of *détente*, and here the SPD was important. It was the SPD’s job to implement the new line and to accept the borders established in ’45, a line that the CDU at that time could neither enforce within their own party nor—after twenty years of *revanchism*—credibly present to the socialist states. It was intended to force the U.S.S.R. between a rock and a hard place: a policy of coexistence and a lull in the arms race in exchange for an end to their support for the liberation movements, combined with the hope that the market, consumption, and propaganda would wear down the socialist states from the inside, gradually destabilizing them politically. That didn’t work either. Most importantly, they didn’t develop anything capable of destroying the Vietnamese revolution. Vietnam became the example of revolutionary war, protracted war, and the continuity of attacks through setbacks and victories.

Since Vietnam, counterinsurgency strategists have been saying that the most important thing is the struggle against consciousness, because it is the strength of the people’s consciousness that is decisive for victory in a protracted war, not the weapons. It is the method that works for us, because it is the process that advances the revolutionary cause and makes its necessity and reality both evident and understandable. That has been the objective of all national liberation struggles, and it can already be seen in the experiences of the West European guerilla as well.

Because they know that they have always lost, and must always lose, this struggle for consciousness against the liberation movements, the current military strategy accepts this as a fact and relies on the atomic blitzkrieg. The overall arms buildup is meant to gain absolute military superiority over the U.S.S.R. Given that they can no longer intervene in the U.S.S.R. without provoking a nuclear attack, they must neutralize its capacity to oppose them. That is what is behind the “global war on many fronts” that Weinberger talks about, the medium-range missiles

stationed here, and the RDF. They are meant to quickly bring things to a head. That is the nature of the conflict. Because a political victory is no longer possible for imperialism, the only option left is a short total war.

Revolutionary war is a qualitative concept. It not only addresses the conflicts occurring on different levels, but demands a conscious decision in its favor, a conscious decision in favor of proletarianization and the abolition of private property. We're not struggling with some abstract understanding of imperialism, as if it were something with no connection to our lives: we're struggling because we know what it is, because through the rupture each of us has experienced its depths of destruction and alienation. Our struggle is based on an understanding of the system that is rooted in an awareness of our own situation, and this is the basis of our desire for liberation—because the fact that the metropole is ripe for revolution is experienced on a personal level: one cannot live in a system where one's existence is based on extermination, where every idea and any humanity can only be asserted violently, through revolution. And we base our attacks on an analysis of the conditions here: the imperialist center, the continuity of German imperialism since '45 in reactionary alliance with the preeminent capitalist power today, and the formation of an imperialist bloc and a unified military commando.

In recent years there has been a tendency on the left here to generate different lines based on concepts like anti-imperialism, internationalism, and social revolution. But given that they address the same thing, these concepts cannot be placed in contradiction to one another—otherwise they become a caricature of themselves: internationalism reduced to appeals for solidarity with revolution somewhere else, so the question of whether people want revolution for themselves doesn't raise its ugly head; anti-imperialism as research into imperialism, where the abstractions fail to address the practical question of how to resist it; social revolution as a synonym for social questions that must be addressed to meet people's needs, which can only end in reformism so long as the key question is ignored, namely what power relations need to be destroyed for people around the world to have their needs met. This approach only blocks any learning process or practice that could lead to a united attack.

The goal of the front in the metropole is internationalist: liberation—social revolution and anti-imperialism based on an antagonistic relationship to the power structure.

The RAF developed its attacks along both these front lines: against the internal power structure, the imperialist state, and against its bulwark, the U.S. military apparatus. That was our fundamental starting

point: the fact that the revolutionary process could only be carried out using antagonistic power if our strategic goal took the unified nature of the imperialist system into account—the social revolution as a world revolution. If the system is not completely destroyed, the social revolution cannot pursue its needs or goals in any sector. Certainly not in the metropole. Here, nobody seems to grasp that.

We wanted to make that concrete in '77, because it was the practical point at which the two coincided and their strategic identity became clear. They converged inasmuch as the question of power posed by the FRG state forced the entire system to respond and mobilize. At that point and for the first time, they openly based their actions and decisions on the reality of the international class war, because by attacking this state we also attacked its function within the greater imperialist project, which is to establish the necessary conditions here in Western Europe for them to carry out their global offensive—and because in order to act at this level they must do so as a unified system.

Their decision as an alliance not to engage in the prisoner exchange was a strategic decision that touched upon the basic nature of their military project: the question of whether they could pull it off here. For them it was a question of doing whatever was necessary to preserve the first phase of West European unification that had taken place prior to '77—the integration of police forces and the centralization of counterinsurgency—because this is the internal precondition for the second phase, the arming and shaping of the West European states as centers for war.

A victory for the guerilla in the FRG, the country that has led this process and pushed it forward, would have posed some basic questions. It would have fundamentally altered the balance of power here and everywhere. So Schmidt got to the point where he had to unleash the fascism of the metropole both at home and abroad, using it to set the next phase in motion. In London, on October 28, ten days after Stammheim and Mogadishu, he demanded that gaps in the missile system be closed and that the new American medium-range missiles be stationed in Western Europe.

It was the overall situation that determined the intensity of the confrontation in '77, as well as its dimensions: every step of the way things were coordinated with Carter, Giscard,<sup>16</sup> and Callaghan,<sup>17</sup> Schmidt's source for every word that entered the federal government's official documents; the U.S. State Department's Crisis Management Team remained on duty in Bonn the entire time; threats were made against

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16 Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the president of France in 1977.

17 James Callaghan, the prime minister of Great Britain in 1977.

the countries that the prisoners had identified as potentially willing to receive them; eventually the imperialist actions were integrated to enable the GSG-9 to act against the Palestinian commando in Mogadishu.

Because it was a strategic decision made at the level of the entire system, the interest of West German businessmen in saving one of their own was also overruled. Schmidt's job was to negotiate domestic priorities with business and the opposition. The practical expression of this was that he involved Zahn and Brauchitsch<sup>18</sup> in the Crisis Management Team, integrating them directly at the decision-making level. Such concerted action also led to Strauß' trip to Saudi Arabia, where he publicly promised the Saudis Flick Leopards<sup>19</sup> to be used against Somalia. Somalia was the country that, at that point, had publicly said they would take in the prisoners and had thus exposed Wischnewski's lies. This came out when, much later, the Saudis asked where the Leopards were, and neither Schmidt nor Kohl<sup>20</sup> could push the issue by the pro-Israel lobby in parliament. Schleyer naturally placed his complete trust in Brauchitsch, as his letter proves. This was a given, because more or less all of the important figures in Bonn were caught up in these companies' political nets, as he well knew. All of that was nothing but an afterthought, and any commitment the business world had to him was never more than show. In the phase we are now in, it is not the interests of the different factions that are decisive, but those of the entire system. Ponto's successor Friderichs<sup>21</sup> said, "It is only a problem if it affects the material core"—meaning, not when it affects just one or two of their most important people, but only when the functioning of the most central aspects of their power structure is threatened—because then the whole machine will be disrupted.

Similarly, Schmidt before parliament: "If either Herr Kohl or I ever found ourselves in a similar situation, we would be condemned to make the same sacrifice, as everyone here in the house knows." Elsewhere, Schmidt has said that this situation set the standard and that after '77 no NATO country could backtrack from that decision. With '77 it became a doctrine for Western Europe, as Kissinger had already declared it to be in '74. It has nothing to do with strength. The entire hard line comes

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18 Eberhard von Brauchitsch was, at the time, the general business manager of the Flick Corporation, one of Germany's key steel-producing companies.

19 Leopards are a kind of military tank.

20 Helmut Kohl (CDU) was the leader of the opposition in 1977. He had previously been president and by the time of this statement had been elected chancellor.

21 Hans Friderichs (FDP) was a former minister of economics and, at the time, the President of the Dresdner Bank, having replaced Ponto after he was assassinated by the RAF in 1977.



from their need to do everything they can to prevent a revolutionary breakthrough in the metropole. Countering this possibility and using the state of emergency laws against the guerilla—as they did here in '77, and in Italy in '78 and '82<sup>22</sup>—strikes them as the lesser of two evils. The real problem is not the prisoners being freed, it is that freeing them would mean acknowledging the revolutionary process in the metropole as a political fact. Kupperman,<sup>23</sup> who is an advisor for emergency planning and fighting terrorism at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, told an antiterrorism conference in Hamburg shortly after the Schleyer action, “I think that what the question of negotiations involves and how it unfolds at a political level requires that we be incredibly firm, at least from a strategic point of view. Governments can't react in such a way that they surrender their sovereignty to a swarm of bees, which is what terrorists are when compared to the armed state.”

But that is completely relative, because it always depends on what the concrete conditions are, that is to say, how relevant an action is and how long it lasts, what the action can hope to mobilize and what friction and long-term political effect it creates. The decisive aspect of an action, which is not limited to the military attack, is what new level of action it will make possible; this begins with and develops out of the question of power. So, determining the next step on the basis of the new political quality—not in the military sense, but rather overall, in anticipation of a new phase—is the only way a military attack can have political significance. That is the most important lesson we have drawn from the Schleyer action.

Because the military strategy has become the linchpin, politics are now dead—or perhaps they have achieved their “pure expression.”

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22 On March 16, 1978, the Red Brigades kidnapped Italy's Christian Democratic leader and former president Aldo Moro, demanding the release of imprisoned members of their organization. The government refused to negotiate, and, after 55 days, the Red Brigades executed Moro. On December 17, 1981, the Red Brigades kidnapped U.S. General James Lee Dozier. He was freed by a NOCS (Italian counterinsurgency) unit 42 days later, on January 28, 1982. Besides a paramilitary response, the Italian state also implemented a judicial counterinsurgency assault, which took form as a law named after Minister of Internal Affairs Francesco Cossiga, “introducing temporary [provisional] detention in police custody, extending search powers without a mandate from the competent judge, further increasing the length of preventative imprisonment, and introducing the criminal offence of subversive association. The Cossiga law also introduced sentencing discounts for ‘terrorists’ who choose to cooperate; this was the first special law on ‘repentance’ that entered the Italian legal order.” Italo di Sabato (Osservatorio sulla Repressione), “Italy: The never-ending emergency,” *Statewatch Bulletin* 19 no. 1, January-March 2009.

23 Robert Kupperman was a leading U.S. counterinsurgency expert. After leaving the government he worked for the Center for Strategic and International Studies until his death in 2006, authoring several books on “terrorism.”

Stümper<sup>24</sup> has already said that security policy has become survival policy for the imperialist states. The national security state is the form this survival policy takes internally: it is a preventive reaction based on the global intensification of the tensions between imperialism and revolution—against “the national and international struggle of this decade” (Boge<sup>25</sup>), against “the epochal upheaval” (Stümper), against the possibility of “international civil war.” (Geißler<sup>26</sup>)

Against the backdrop of world revolution, they are formulating their concept of a reactionary world state. When Maihofer spoke some years ago about the global domestic policy and global society, where there were no revolutionaries just criminals, and Rebmann spoke of the coming international legislation designed to prosecute the liberation movements, that wasn’t simply their fantasy of a Thousand Year Imperialist Reich; it has a real, uncompromising basis. A West European strategy, a European BKA, and a NATO foreign policy “that speaks with one voice” are to be the legs on which it will stand. It is part and parcel of the overall offensive, the cutting edge of which is the military strategy. It also represents the sordid nature of reformists: they deal with imperialist war as if it were insane and irrational, reducing it to an incomprehensible and surreal apocalypse, because they really don’t want it—they don’t want to be blown away—but they want the struggle against it even less. That is not really irrational. It has an elementary and precise goal, to destroy the worldwide antagonism, while ensuring one’s personal survival. And whether or not that is unrealistic can only be answered through struggle. It is, in any event, an open question at this point, and it is the key question at the heart of the conflict today. The West European guerilla is simultaneously facing complex strategic possibilities and especially difficult conditions. We face a tremendously intense military presence with unimaginable firepower at its disposal, a heavily armed police apparatus which is attempting to dominate the entire society, a well-integrated media etc.—and the fight starts from a situation of mass casualties and critical defeats for the revolutionary struggles. The proletariat here has always been confronted by two kinds of enemies: counterrevolution, war, and fascism, on the one hand, and the different methods of social democracy, consumption, and the state, on the other. They get nothing out of any of this, but the history and experience of the metropole does however provide them with a

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24 From 1971 to 1990 Alfred Stümper was the Superintendent of Police for the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg.

25 From 1981 to 1990 Heinrich Boge was the president of the BKA.

26 From 1982 to 1985 Heiner Geißler was the general secretary of the CDU.

school where they can learn everything they need to know to understand the enemy.

The West European guerilla groups began their struggles under different conditions and with different perspectives. Over the past fifteen years, they have moved closer to each other as a result of a practical process of learning from developments and from each other. “An identity across differences,” Jan once called it, and that must be the case now if we hope to make this phase the second phase for the guerilla in the metropole and establish the strategy in the metropole as the West European strategy that underlies every step we take.

Brigitte Mohnhaupt  
Stammheim, December 4, 1984