

**KATHERINA HAMMERSCHMIDT COMMANDO**  
**RED ARMY FACTION**  
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nothing has changed since the step we took in our history, a step which we needed and wanted to take. we are busy with a new process in which a social counter-power from below can develop, and from which can come new proposals for a revolutionary process of change. this requires a discussion in which various people can find new foundations and common criteria for this process. this is about building up a social counter-power which can be a relevant force in a new international struggle for changing the destructive relationships of capitalism. thus, we have to fully understand both the international situation as well as the changed reality within our own society, and this process must also "brush off all the old ideas (of the left)...", because only through a very deep discussion can we come upon a proposal for how to change the ruling relationships in a revolutionary manner. only out of this process can the questions regarding what forms of struggle and concrete organizing are necessary be answered.

for us, this process, now as before, has the highest priority. the necessity is obvious to us each moment as we observe the continuing destructive development of the capitalist system before our eyes. this system, for a long time now, has been responsible for marginalization, for the material and social misery and death of millions of people in the three continents. today, the fundamental crisis within this system has reached a point where the destruction of living conditions within the metropolises can no longer be avoided, and material and social misery has become a reality for more and more people here, and many people realize that this system's perspective can only mean hopelessness for them. given this situation, the lack of any decent alternative as a social power has had catastrophic consequences.

while the state protects and advances the expansion and escalation of fascist and racist mobilizations within the society and, for example, continues its hate-campaign against refugees, a great number of now-visible contradictions have been channeled in a reactionary direction because our side has been hampered by isolation and disorganization. last august, we wrote a paper in which we reflected upon our history and at the same time sketched out criteria and interests for the future; thoughts which had developed out of our discussions from the past few years. these thoughts are the starting-points for the discussion we'd like to initiate. naturally, new questions and interests have arisen. although our paper did not create much resonance, we would like to develop the discussion both wider and deeper. parts of the women's movement criticized us for not involving ourselves more in their discussions, and the same applies to the discussion of racism. and also from certain monumental events, for example those in rostock, it has become crucial for us to carry out this discussion more diligently.

although even before the sharpening of living conditions here and before the failure of the left as a political force and the lack of perspective in so many people, the road was left open for the rise of the fascists, on the other hand it's also clear that the roots lie deeper as to why, even here in the metropolises, in the new great germany, disappointment has gotten channeled to such a degree against foreigners. everyone needs to examine this closely. as one man from mozambique said: "in our country, people are poor, but that doesn't mean they turn around and hit the people lower than themselves." the discussion of racism has to be a significant part of the build-up of the counter-power from below, and it's something which can't stay stuck in a ghetto or as something to be pushed off onto others, but rather it has to be a question of personal consciousness, of how each individual views and wants social change.

the autonome-l.u.p.u.s. group has critiqued the mistakes made in the past in their book "the history of racism and the boat". they write: "so obvious, and yet it seems today that the revolutionary left of the last 20 years overlooked these obvious racisms, the striving for 'specific german' characteristics... that which has become impossible in leftist discussions of patriarchal conditions seems to be no big deal when it comes to the question of german-ness: we don't have anything to do with it." the chances are great to do something different today and to discover something new: the question of the building of a counter-power from below is not exclusively a question for white, german leftists, but rather a question of how people living here can organize in common. and the population here is comprised of people of different nationalities and skin colors. "...the dialogue with black women need not take place in some far-off land, but rather would be much easier and more intense if carried out with women who live here in germany. the history of migrants and their knowledge from their nations of origin is just as important for the understanding of internationalist associations as their political opinions and their experiences with the racism and sexism which they experience here are important for the understanding of german society..." (from "basta", woman against colonialism)

it was the 68-movement which took back that which fascism had chased down and destroyed in judaism and brought the left and its culture, worth, and continuity back to life and justified these in west germany. and if today there is a revival of fascism, then it will spread itself in the political-cultural vacuum which the left has abandoned through its retreat from social responsibility and the new proposal of values and attitudes." (lutz tauffer, imprisoned raf member) it is one duty of the left to find new value and life in its praxis, despite the fact that what continually comes out in the society is that which 500 years of colonialism

have implanted in the metropolitan consciousness: racist ideology. white supremacist consciousness has led to the colonialist and imperialist exploitation of the people of the three continents for the past 500 years. this is still present in the white metropolitan consciousness, and the state and capital often mobilize this during times of crisis. racism means categorizing people as "different" or "more-" and "less-valuable". this is how people who are no longer needed or who will be still more exploited are categorized by the capitalist production system. the collapse of the social element among people has led to the advance of racism. this collapse means a 24-hour per day struggle among people for competition and the push to achieve, according to the dictates of the capitalist system; people are robbed of their own criteria for worth, only to have them replaced by capitalism's functional standards - most effectively in the metropolises. this means, for example, a connection between achievement and labor as the defining standards for the worth of a human being: without a job, you're nothing...that is today's standard, and most people have become accustomed to living their entire lives according to an entirely pre-destined rhythm, lives in which there is no place for creativity and a desire for living. this shows how, under this system, most things are valued according to their relationship to physical matters, which naturally means that it is most often women that are forced to view their bodies as wares to be either consumed by men or turned down...

it is and always has been the practice of the ruling capitalist system to divide people with such criteria and with 1,000 different divisions: the division between those that are more- and less-valuable; between those that are able to work and those that are "shy of work"; between black and white; between men and women; between young and old; between the sick, the weak, and the disabled and the strong and healthy; between the clever and the "dumb". this destructive process has today reached a dimension in which the society has been undergoing an internal conversion. a racist consciousness, and its destructive process in the society, can only be combated and reversed by means of struggles in which social conditions and values are put forward and transformed. a perspective of revolutionary change can only be realized in such processes. either the left - and by that we mean all those who are searching for ways of putting forward a humane way of living both here and worldwide - must make a new beginning, which has a relevance in the society - or the initiative will remain on the right, with the fascists. either our side will develop a base-movement from below, which is directed by solidarity and justice, and by the struggle against this cold society and against poverty and a lack of perspective, or the explosive contradictions will remain destructive and the violence will escalate, each person against the other. there are leftists who don't want to discuss these questions of social development - the questions which we and others are posing - because they see them as reformist. such false discussions of revolutionary versus reformist are useless when it comes to the re-orientation of revolutionary politics; and also holding onto timeless truths won't give anyone any answers to the new questions of today. at the same time, the notion that the revolution has to be international is also banal - it's of no use to anyone, not even the peoples of the east and the south. the real questions start by asking how our own social counter-power can be developed here, and how our experiences and progress can be concretely transformed into a relevant force in the international struggle and discussion.

in this sense, we can no longer look for a re-orientation as part of an international grouping, because both in terms of content and superficiality, this is absurd. getting stuck on orienting on others to see how to tear things apart (or to see if it's better to hold onto things) is an old manner of behavior of the german left. what was positive about the discussions since april 10 of last year was that within the radical-left, a lot of old garbage - like competitive or limiting thinking, or the obstinate retention of old manners of behavior - was scrutinized, and now, since things are so open, they can finally be turned around. the advantage of the re-orientation of revolutionary politics is that now people are getting together, organizing and acting, people that actually want to learn new thoughts from one another and develop themselves.

since we halted the escalation from our side nearly one year ago, the state has heightened its pressure on progressive individuals and the political opponents of this system; attempts to search for a new way from out of the few struggled-after spaces have been beaten back like never before. one prime example was the counter-congress to the g-7 summit in munich, which was hindered before it started, making an international discussion impossible, and also the demonstration there which was encircled by the police. anti-fascist organizations are being criminalized and anti-fascist demonstrations, like the one last summer in mannheim, are beaten down. of course, there has to be a connection between the hindering of self-determined proposals, the pursuit and jailing of anti-fascists, and the rising strength of the fascist mobilization. the ruling powers know that all measures which the present crisis forces them to take will only sharpen the contradictions: societal collapse, rising housing shortages, rising unemployment, crisis in the steel industry, crisis in the automobile industry...

reuter, the head of daimler-benz, talks of 30-50 years of crisis - all of this will fall on the shoulders of the people. at the same time, the state needs to get a big mobilization for great germany behind it. when, for example, federal troops go into military action, like in the war in iraq and also against the kurdish people - then the great german state takes a different perspective and tries to get a big acceptance here for germany's role as a military power - there's little difference between this and the racist, white mobilization of the "german citizens" on their boat, something which this society might one day manage in the interest of

the ruling capitalists. while on the one hand they have drilled the notion into people's minds that the foreigners and the refugees and the scrapping of the constitutional asylum clause are all part of "the germans' problem", and they thereby call the fascist mobilization into the plan, on the other hand there has been the ruling powers' fake side, like the demonstration against racial hatred held in berlin at the end of last year. also in this way, the state seeks to channel the many people who are opposed to the fascist attacks and murders. to insure that this movement does not develop into a movement of international solidarity of the oppressed against the ruling powers and their fascists attackers, a weeks-long media campaign was initiated: talk of violence, violence from the left being equated with violence from the right. although last year alone there were attacks on foreign, disabled, and homeless people which left 17 people dead, kohl talk of the need to struggle against violence from both the right and the left. the jubilation of the ruling powers upon the collapse of the state-socialist systems and the "big victory" of the capitalist system has been silent for some time now - this development has placed the capitalist system in its greatest crisis. the ruling powers have no answers to this crisis - but this doesn't mean that they won't continue with their inhumane plans and measures in an attempt to regulate the situation, which is something they cannot do. it seems that the only line which they have perfected is their struggle against the left. they feel that all those involved in an anti-fascist and anti-racist mobilization from below against the ruling interests need to be defeated. they want to prevent all initiatives in which people attempt to organize solutions to their problems by means of solidarity from below. as a part of this, the state has been taking revenge on old communists and anti-fascists, and the trial and imprisonment of gerhard boegelein is exemplary of this process, namely that all resistance experiences from this century need to be wiped out. and another part of this posture is revealed in the state's treatment of our imprisoned comrades. we have often been criticized because in our communique last april we linked our decision to halt our actions to the situation of the prisoners, particularly to the state's destructive stance. we have always maintained that the step in our history which we took was grounded in the necessity of developing new foundations, and we stated that this necessity was independent of the state's conduct. but from the beginning, it was unclear how the state would react to the decrease in pressure from our side, and that's why we left the option open of intervening, if necessary, in order to place limits on the state's conduct. in august '92 we wrote: "we will then decide on armed intervention as a moment of pushing back and not as a further strategy. we won't simply be made to revert to our old ways. this escalation is not in our interest. but the state has to realize that when it leaves no other option, we have the means, the experience, and the determination to make them take responsibility." it's ridiculous to say that we were making the question of the re-development of revolutionary politics dependent on the prisoners. but the fact is, our step forced the state to show its real intentions concerning freedom for the political prisoners. this whole situation is a contradiction; we have to deal with this and act within this. after all, we don't live in a vacuum.

after we removed the pressure from our side, the state once again decided on an escalation against the prisoners - the prosecution against christian klar and the new wave of trials will put people away for their entire lives; the decision to not release bernd roessner early; and the refusal of prisoners based on the offer of release after submission to psychiatric tests, whereby they would be forced to claim that their struggle, their initiatives, their entire opposition was simple insanity. the prisoners are not going to be regrouped, because this would allow them to take part in discussion processes and social processes - and there's even less chance of them being released. just as before, they are to be destroyed, and their experiences in the struggle are to be kept distant from others.

it has become clear to us that a political decision demands that the state turn away from its destructive stance and adopt a political attitude with regard to the prisoner question - the state justice system has shown that it does not have the political will to make this decision. of course, there are thousands of questions still on the table, and as for a discussion of solidarity, in which our struggles and experiences of the past 25 years can be learned from, decisions for the future can be made, and from which common criteria for new proposals for a process of change can be made, this discussion has hardly begun. but there are fundamentals and things that are self-understood that need not be questioned, and from which we proceed: for example, the relationship between our prisoners and the reality that the state has tortured political prisoners in isolation for 22 years - we are fighting for the freedom of these prisoners. we will not say that we have been looking for a new strategy while what happens to them in the meantime does not fit in our concept. we can't start a new beginning or develop new proposals separately from the question of how the freedom of our comrades who have been imprisoned during the 22 years of our struggle can be won. they have been in isolation cells and small groups for 18...22 years!

there is no question: they must all be free! the question of whether the freedom for all political prisoners can be pushed through with a common effort by all left-wing and progressive people also, according to us, has the significance of whether, in this phase of re-orientation, a strong and self-conscious force, which will be a counter-power to the ruling relationships, can be built up. anyone today that accepts powerlessness and is seeking cover, because they think that our side is too weak - how can they then think that we will be able to build up a force that can change the common relationships? with the commando katarina hammerschmidt, we attacked the prison in weiterstadt and thereby delayed the detention of people there by several years.

with this action, we sought to insert some political pressure against the firm stance against our imprisoned comrades and to force the state to deal with this question. but the pushing through of the demand for their freedom requires various initiatives from many people. over the last year, we have sought, despite the absence of pressure from us, to keep this question urgent. sadly, those things that could have been put into action and pushed to their limits were not taken up by the comrades of the left-radical spectrum. with our action, we have once again increased this pressure and made the urgency real. we think that this can be utilized. "we demand the closure of the weiterstadt prison!

weiterstadt was conceived as a deportation prison and constructed accordingly..." (from a discussion paper by prisoners in stuttgart-stammheim, sept. '91) the weiterstadt prison is exemplary of how the state deals with the splintering and broadening contradictions: more and more people are faced with prison, prison, prison - and this prison was also supposed to act as a deportation prison as a part of the racist state refugee policy. in its technological perfection of isolation and differentiation of imprisoned people, it was to be a model for the rest of europe. weiterstadt, after berlin-ploetzenzee, was to be the second fully-conceived maximum-security prison for women, and it was being billed as "the most humane prison" in germany. but behind this notion is hidden its scientifically further-developed concept of the isolation, differentiation, and total control of prisoners. it is the principle of reward and punishment in a high-tech form that forces prisoners to be disciplined and subordinate and which forces them, even if it means breaking them, to give their "cooperation". the electronic surveillance system was the most expensive and highly-developed in all of europe, with which all aspects of the prison could be controlled and utilized for the psychological program of destroying all attempts at solidarity, friendship, and self-determined organization. "before the prisoners are divided into their various living groups, they undergo a selection process. here, a psychiatrist can monitor their willingness to adapt or their level of resistance. on the basis of these results, the exact division of the prisoners into their living groups is decided upon.

the living groups are set up hierarchically. they range from the uncooperative and unbreakable ones to those that can adapt. the goal: to have the prisoners go through a 'carrier' from the lowest levels (i.e., unadapted) to the highest (i.e., conformist) living groups." (from the info-paper "bunte hilfe", darmstadt) some women from ploetze, who went on hunger-strike to call for the abolition of the living group plan, wrote the following: "this situation is characterized by a level of control and repression whose totality can hardly be imagined. ploetze has been conceptualized in this way, both architecturally and in terms of personnel, so as to prevent contact between women or at least that everything be recorded in detail. the women will be dispersed in forced groupings separated from one another, and then it will be observed how well they adapt and how they best can be made ready. each isolated cell has a two-way intercom, so that the women can be acoustically monitored at all times.

all of the hallways are monitored by cameras, and the common areas, where the prisoners spend their free time, have glass walls - in short, the perfect surveillance over all living areas..." with the lie of a "humane prison", the justice department was hoping to get prisoners in other prisons used to the idea of their transfer to weiterstadt. for years, they have ignored the demands of prisoners in frankfurt-preungsheim, announcing instead that weiterstadt would be open in '93. what does the demand to dismantle the brutal cement display in preungsheim have to do with weiterstadt? it's not merely the claim that the prisoners' conditions would be changed in weiterstadt (where their transfer was already planned) that is contradicted by reality. it has proved that their answer to developments in the society is to build more and more prisons (because preungsheim was not going to be closed down, just renovated) and more places of detention to jail more and more people. the construction of prisons is no solution for the (preungsheim) prisoners. their demands must be fulfilled - prisons must be torn down.

**FREEDOM FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!**

**FREE ALL HIV+ PRISONERS!**

**FREEDOM FOR ALL REFUGEES KEPT IN EXPELLING CAMPS!**

**CLOSE ALL ISOLATION WINGS!**

**WE GREET ALL THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING IN THE PRISONS FOR THEIR DIGNITY - IN PREUNGSHEIM, SANTA FU, PLOETZENSEE, RHEINBACH, STAMMHEIM, STRAUBING...**

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL PRISONS STRUGGLES!**

**THE ROAD TO LIBERATION IS PART OF A SOCIAL CHANGE PROCESS, WHICH MUST BE PART OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE! FIGHT AGAINST THE RACISM OF THE STATE AND THE NAZIS! REMOVE THE RACIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SOCIETY THROUGH THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOCIAL ELEMENT AMONG PEOPLE - ALSO FOR THIS DO WE NEED A BASE-**

MOVEMENT FROM BELOW, WHICH IS DIRECTED BY SOLIDARITY AND JUSTICE AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE COLD SOCIETY, POVERTY, AND THE LACK OF PERSPECTIVE!

FOR A SOCIETY WITHOUT PRISONS!

KATHARINA HAMMERSCHMIDT COMMANDO  
RED ARMY FRACTION

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ps:

the notion that we protected the lives of the guards and the low-level justice officials only out of "tactical concerns" or that they could thank kinkel for their lives is, of course, a lie. the raf has no interest in wounding or killing such people. this lie is also in line with the fact that the baw [federal prosecutor's office - trans.] forgot to mention the warning notices which we painted all over the prison's outer perimeter - although they usually like to parade every piece of evidence they have.