

Response to the October 28, 1993 Split Statement (November 2, 1993)

To those RAF prisoners who support the statement.

For a discussion of everything related to the struggles of the RAF and the prisoners.

There have been no secret negotiations of any kind between us and the state. "Trading" the armed struggle for the political prisoners' freedom is not something we're considering. All claims to the contrary are bullshit, untrue.

What is true is that we de-escalated the conflict on April 10, 1992. The global changes at the end of the '80s caused a collapse of the left's overall perspective, and the role of armed struggle in the FRG suddenly became a strategic concept from a previous era. The impasse we found ourselves facing was one expression of this development. The global changes made it clear that we needed to critically re-examine the struggles of the previous period, including the RAF's. This is nothing but the most basic expression of revolutionary consciousness.

At this stage, with the pressing need to develop new approaches to and ideas about the revolutionary process, we still want to win freedom for the political prisoners. We have always said that this will only be accomplished through struggle.

We are not responsible for guaranteeing at all costs that the RAF continues on into the next millennium, just because it has a twenty-three-year history. We remain open to any and all possibilities regarding how to bring about a transformation and what shape it should take; something that will depend on what we and all those who want to help develop a new revolutionary strategy determine to be the best approach for the future revolutionary process. Coming up with new methods and organizational forms will require a new strategic perspective. This has nothing to do with renouncing armed struggle.

The state and capital's joy at the deathblow they believe your statement has dealt the RAF is premature. We will continue to bear the responsibility that we, the RAF, have, until something new is developed. And it's all the same to us whether that means the RAF continues on as is or whether it takes some new form in the context of a new revolutionary left. The most important thing is that it be suited to the needs and perspective of a revolutionary process.

In this regard, we were also serious about what we said in the Weiterstadt communiqué, which, like all of the RAF's writings, expresses what we really think: "This will require a clear grasp of both the changes that have occurred internationally and those that have occurred within our own society... A wide-ranging discussion is needed to bring about the revolutionary overthrow of existing conditions. This will also allow us to address questions regarding the methods and form of organization required for the struggle."

Let us say this clearly: the conversation that the Celle prisoners had with Ströbele or hope to have with I. Bubis – as described by Karl-Heinz in the November 11, 1993, edition of the *taz* – is in no way opposed to our view of things.

With your October 28 statement, a point has been reached where you are forcing us to take a position on the RAF's past relationship with certain prisoners and on the ongoing distortions and efforts to break people's solidarity with us. After the blow we received on June 27, 1993, we had hoped to have more time before having to make another public statement.

We need to address a major error, our contact with a *Verfassungsschutz* infiltrator, about which we will have more to say at a later time. To begin with, Birgit's arrest and Wolfgang's murder were painful for us. Furthermore, the fact that the state was able to use an infiltrator to set us up to be attacked militarily indicates that on a fundamental level we had failed to correctly assess the confrontation with the state. The situation forced us to reconsider our options and rethink how we could contribute to the reorientation process. June 27 created an entirely new situation for us. Despite the conflicts between the RAF and certain prisoners and the fact that some of you had already effectively broken with us, we had hoped we could once again develop a perspective that would allow us to rely upon each other politically. We hoped that this would be the case in the stage that, one way or another, lies ahead. This is what we had been focusing on.

We didn't want a split with you, despite the fact that, following the attack on us, some of you adopted the kind of approach we would have expected from state security: using the cops against us politically. Talk of the "Little Steinmetz Unit," "the *Verfassungsschutz*'s ideological foothold in the underground," all the way to the insinuation that along with the Celle prisoners, Birgit, and Wolfgang, we were seeking "a place in the Reich."

For some time now, some of you have been making statements that sound like they are being developed in vitro for state security. For some time now, some of you also seem to have made a conscious decision to accuse comrades with whom you have ideological or political disagreements of collaborating

with the state, as if they had no moral integrity. This is what Lochte, the former head of the Hamburg *Verfassungsschutz*, said would happen when he argued in favor of association in 1989. He was convinced that you would no longer be able to avoid conflicts and disagreements, but that you would in fact tear each other to bits.

Years of repeated accusations and rumors about our imprisoned comrades in Celle have now led to people around the world believing that the Celle prisoners have been cooperating with the *Verfassungsschutz*. This continues today with the lies in Brigitte's statement, which were made public in the October 30 interview with Ströbele: that Ströbele spoke to Benz from the *Verfassungsschutz*.

Prior to October 28, we had held out hope that those prisoners who seemed compelled to engage in this behavior might still get over their petit bourgeois rivalry – typically German behavior, in comrades who had once chosen to put their lives on the line for something different. We had hoped it wouldn't come to the RAF and RAF prisoners being reduced to bickering groupuscules, like so many in the FRG who do nothing but sling mud at each other and scheme to achieve their political ends.

We write this letter knowing that there are more important questions regarding both the situation in the FRG and the international situation; questions to which we have no answers. But this is more pain than we can bear.

With your statement you are providing cover for a sleazy line of attack. There is no other possible explanation for you to denounce such an initiative by certain prisoners as a deal with the state, when in reality some of you considered the same kind of initiative at some point in 1990, as can be seen in your texts, which refer to "Friends of Reason," meaning public figures with economic clout. We only found out about this much later, "by accident," as it were.

At the time, all you were trying to do was to get the process moving, which was also a question of your freedom, a new starting point for you and us both, as well as for everyone else who was seeking to establish a new orientation. We were supposed to de-escalate in that scenario too, albeit without publicly explaining the specific context within which this was to occur.

We're not implying that you made a deal with the state or were seeking your "place in the Reich." You should accord the same respect to Birgit, Wolfgang, the Celle prisoners, as well as to us.

As we now know, you dropped the initiative because it was unlikely to succeed and because it was not compatible with the political situation at the time. Your indignation is hypocritical. What you're now trying to publicly portray as a deal, a way forward to a solution for everyone – including those underground – this is something you yourselves have attempted. Some of you damn us, curse us, and hate us, because we failed to recognize this "in time." Obviously, you had some idea of how things would transpire: possibly exile as a starting point.

The way some of you saw it, we should have issued a statement announcing that the RAF was ending its armed struggle. The thinking at the time was that otherwise any thought of freedom for the prisoners would be illusory. We were to withdraw. At the very least, the state would say "thanks" for that – and nobody knew what would happen next. That was certainly not in line with our view. We were acting with the idea that the only way to establish a new starting point was through struggle, which also meant intervening with arms during the period in which the strategic perspective had yet to be elaborated, if that was what the struggle required of us.

You accuse us of "turning armed actions into a commodity" with our threats and with the bombing of Weiterstadt prison. Is your interpretation of actions the only one allowed? Since when do you consider actions meant to exert pressure on the state to be reprehensible? You know as well as we do that it is in the political purpose of armed actions to exert pressure on the state, in order to bring about favorable developments.

The relationship to revolutionary politics and to armed intervention that you are advancing today is so extremely abstract and empty that it is completely alien to us and unlike anything we have ever heard of from combatants anywhere in the world.

Even if you repeat your lies a thousand times, it won't make them true. Anyone who describes the action against the Weiterstadt prison as apolitical must have a screw loose. You should explain the SUBSTANTIVE reasons why you reject an action that destroyed a prison that was the cement embodiment of the developments the ruling class is planning and intends to bring about; an action against a project that represents the military approach that the state plans to use to address the intensifying social contradictions in the metropole; an action against a project that represents state racism and the scientifically programmed destruction of people's identity as human beings. The essence of this project and the reasons we destroyed it cannot be separated from our intention to exert pressure on the state for your release. Sure, we already knew that some of you had condemned this action, ostensibly because so many people – even

here – could relate to it. For you, that is a sign of “depoliticization and accommodation.” If we express what many people are feeling, then something isn’t right!

Exerting pressure on the state and capital was always a factor during the twenty-three years of armed struggle and the confrontation between liberation and capital; your hue and cry against this is nothing but an insipid polemic. There is nothing to it. It has nothing to do with political debate or criticism. That was what '77 was about: putting pressure on the state and capital, one key part of the plan being to push industry to apply pressure on Schleyer’s behalf. Had everything already become a commodity at that point? Of course not.

Don’t even try saying that that undertaking drew its legitimacy from its place within the overall perspective of the international revolutionary movement.

In your television interview, Irmgard, you said that you had promised the state that you would not return to the FRG, but would continue to struggle politically in exile. From others in your circle we know that the whole group – i.e., those underground too – felt that once the prisoners were freed their priority would need to be figuring out how to continue the struggle. Everything was going to be open to debate, including how to continue the armed struggle. Even recently, that was still considered the best option for the RAF and the prisoners. We know that very few of you disagreed. That makes it even worse that you’re now trying to claim otherwise and are ranting and raving about a deal.

“No mobilization for the prisoners’ freedom will gain a foothold while guerilla attacks continue...” (excerpt from a letter from Brigitte, early 1993). If you feel that the RAF’s continued existence is jeopardizing your freedom, and your October 28 statement is meant to finally get rid of the RAF once and for all – then you should say so openly. Instead, you pretend to be the guardian of armed struggle and revolutionary intervention in the metropole. That way you can distance yourself from the RAF and present yourself as the victim of the treacherous machinations of Birgit, the Celle prisoners, and us. If you wanted an open and honest conversation, you wouldn’t resort to such disgraceful behavior. And you also could have skipped projecting onto us a relationship to armed struggle straight out of the horror chamber of capitalist commodification that YOU have oriented your overall politics to freeing yourself from: “And if you now announce the practical reversal of your April 92 decision because of our situation in prison – we won’t accept it.” (Eva) Stated as if our problem is that we want to GAIN something for ourselves. The wording suggests that the RAF – bloodthirsty as it is – needs the prisoners, because – being apolitical – it will be unable to go on without them.

As to the history of our relationship, which you see as having been thoroughly destroyed: your struggles, both in the RAF and later as prisoners, are what mobilized us. You played an important part in all of our personal histories. We have always had an abiding faith in you, the imprisoned comrades. This was an important factor in our life-changing decision to support the freedom struggle, and in our hope that despite our different situations and the constant changes on the outside, it would be possible for us to reach an agreement about how to proceed. Obviously, such a thing could only be possible through a living and contradictory process, requiring that we approach one another in an open-minded and respectful way.

Regarding some of you, the trust we once felt was destroyed long ago. We now realize that, given that the basic relationship between us had broken down, we were fooling ourselves in thinking that a political context could be created for us to oppose a power structure like the FRG state together, and that we could thereby lay the groundwork for a new beginning. Our decision to not take a public position on the things that some of you did to oppose us – insofar as you could – was an error. We incorrectly hoped that the conflicts could be resolved through a process of struggle. This was based on our misguided desire to avoid senseless mudslinging, as you were prisoners being held in isolation.

Brigitte, the insinuation in your statement that our relationship to you was one of “take it or leave it...” says a lot more about you and those who agree with you than it does about us. The places where your allegations and accusations miss the mark simply show what your own relationships are like. That has been painfully clear in recent years. We know the line by heart: if we intend to maintain criticism/self-criticism – which you call opportunism and alienation – then you will “sweep us aside” and “find new allies on the left.” Anyone who can relate to what the RAF brings to the discussion is “no longer of interest.” You’ve done it.

That is where you’ve been focusing your energy in recent years, at least publicly. And the methods you’ve resorted to should have been left to our opponents. You’ve proceeded on the assumption that if you repeated your accusations often enough, they would have an effect on the left.

During the past year you have never addressed the CONTENT of our statements, not even in those cases where they led to heated discussions. Instead, you’ve reacted to all of our efforts with your competitive, petit bourgeois bullshit, as if the RAF and revolutionary politics in the FRG were your own private property. Some of you were content with repeating clichés, which might of course be true, but

which are insufficient to provide answers to the questions that are arising from the increasingly intense situation here and abroad.

Even you have talked about making a break, although so far you have not provided any details about what that means for you. For us, as a result of our process, it was important to develop a productive relationship to criticism/self-criticism. Criticism/self-criticism provides a lifeline for combatants around the world – but for some of you, it is like water on a fire. Your break with us has something to do with this, and with the fact that in debates over the past few years we have developed ideas of our own, as have the imprisoned comrades in Celle.

For the past year and a half, you have used buzzwords like “depoliticized” and “accommodation” to sidestep any real debate. And that is truly depoliticized. You treat the work we have done over the past year and a half and the spontaneous “RAF debate” within a section of the left as if it was you yourselves who had brought it about. The de-escalation of the RAF’s armed struggle (which you also wanted!) is treason. When checking out the letters that the group of you have written, many people find you barely comprehensible. It has even been claimed that the RAF’s decision to suspend the armed struggle is to blame for the growing incidence of rape. (Including some people who identify you as their source.) For you the old RAF strategy is always the answer, and so suspending the (RAF’s) armed struggle amounts to an act of betrayal.

Many of these papers demonstrate an inability to understand either the RAF’s twenty-three-year struggle or your former strategy or the broader developments. ’92 saw the sudden appearance of an unprecedented number of windbags, who chose now, of all times, to discover the necessity of the RAF’s struggle. These windbags were of no use to us during our offensive phases. None of them were then or are now prepared to take up arms themselves – not with us, nor by building armed organizations that are less “reformist.” We’re not surprised. Lots of hot air never leads to revising the old ideas: it leads to nothing. You are the ones who started this pseudo-discussion – which is never about people looking at themselves, but instead is always about criticizing others, mainly us – and which is accompanied by a tidal wave of slander: “depoliticized,” “have deserted internationalism,” “we want to turn the page on an historical era” and – voluntarily – join with the *Verfassungschutz* either to determine our politics or to negotiate in our own interests to opportunistically surrender the objectives of our struggle in exchange for a “place in the Reich”, and on and on.

We long ago tired of the way the contents of our texts are distorted whenever it seems convenient to do so, as was the case in a letter before Weiterstadt. Clever wordplay is used to establish the bottom line: everyone must “now watch to see which faction ‘carries the day,’ as the RAF says.” Of course, in the passage quoted, we said the exact opposite: “They [the state] will never retreat of their own accord. Social pressure and struggle for our demands will always be necessary.”

One can see how idiotic your power play is in how you fixate so heavily on the idea of “two factions” in this discussion, although in their *konkret* interview the Celle prisoners already corrected this error of ours from the April statement, a correction that we accepted in the August text. (Of course, this power struggle between the comrades in Celle, ourselves, and to a lesser degree the comrades in Lübeck, is purely imaginary – your real point being to make it seem like the enemy and the issues are significant.) You must have noticed that while you have fixated on this error of ours for over a year now, it has been of little interest to anyone else.

While you have consistently demanded a “debate about the situation” rather than a “debate about the RAF,” you have in fact done the exact opposite, developing a perspective that is entirely focused on your own situation and based on an orientation entirely directed against us. Even now, you still cling to your delusion that the KGT¹ initiative was only intended to free a few prisoners. You fail to understand that it was not intended to free anyone. Everything depended on a political mobilization, which in turn depended on the prisoners’ group providing the ESSENTIAL SOLIDARITY and being in a position to collectively intervene in the discussion, as well as on the balance of power between the RAF and the state. You apparently haven’t noticed that no prisoners have been released since Günter², nor do you seem to have considered what this might mean in light of the blow we received in Bad Kleinen. Your poisonous attitude is interfering with your ability to think things through. In this context, this story of an attempted deal allows you to persist with your delusions.

That you have managed to smear Wolfgang³ with your accusations – he who spent nine years helping

¹ Koordinierungsgruppe Terrorismus (Terrorist Coordination Group); the KGT initiative is more commonly known as the Kinkel initiative.

² Günter Sonnenberg was seriously injured when he was shot in the head during his May 3, 1977 arrest. His immediate release was a regular hunger strike demand. He was released on parole on May 15, 1992

³ Wolfgang Grams, who was a supporter of the RAF from the early 70s onward, went underground in 1984. He was shot to death execution-style in a police ambush in Bad Kleinen on June 27, 1993.

to develop the RAF's politics; and who, amongst other things, was struggling for your freedom; and who was murdered while attempting to avoid capture so that he could continue to struggle and to live on the outside – this just goes to show how low you have sunk. Wolfgang was a person who would walk through fire for his comrades.

Recently, there has been a fresh attempt to mobilize people for your freedom by some comrades with a different approach, one that we find liberating in contrast to the old story of factionalism and the inability to address ideological and political contradictions. This has opened up the possibility of actually having a serious political debate for a change. We agree with the comrades' decision not to address the split. Instead they are addressing contradictions that exist within our side's political perspective. We believe that self-awareness is absolutely necessary for any process that seeks a new way forward for revolutionary politics. Your October 28 statement is directed against this approach as well. It is part of an idiotic power play and an ongoing attachment to obsolete structures, whereby you feel entitled to accuse comrades of collaborating with the system, dragging their reputations through the mud, simply because you have ideological differences with them. In the end, you're the ones who will end up losing as a result of this.

WE CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO MAKE A CONSCIOUS BREAK WITH THIS LEGACY!

We are telling you that this "entirely new approach" you talk about, which is to be built upon your lies, nonsense, and deceptions, will certainly not lead to a situation in which "revolutionary politics can ... regain a foothold here."

We're asking you – and we're being very serious – to stop for a moment. Come to your senses! Even if you have to make some changes to do so. We know our letter will not be easy for you, but you must understand that you left us no choice but to explain what is really going on.

There is a trust that no wall can destroy. Karl-Heinz, Lutz, Knut, Birgit⁴, and ourselves would prefer to avoid this split, but we won't push the issue! This may be the last chance to do otherwise – if it isn't already too late.

Now, it's up to you.

Red Army Faction

⁴ Karl-Heinz Dellwo, Lutz Tauffer, Knut Folkerts (the Celle prisoners) and Birgit Hogefeld.