

# **Arm The Spirit** Autonomist/Anti-Imperialist Journal

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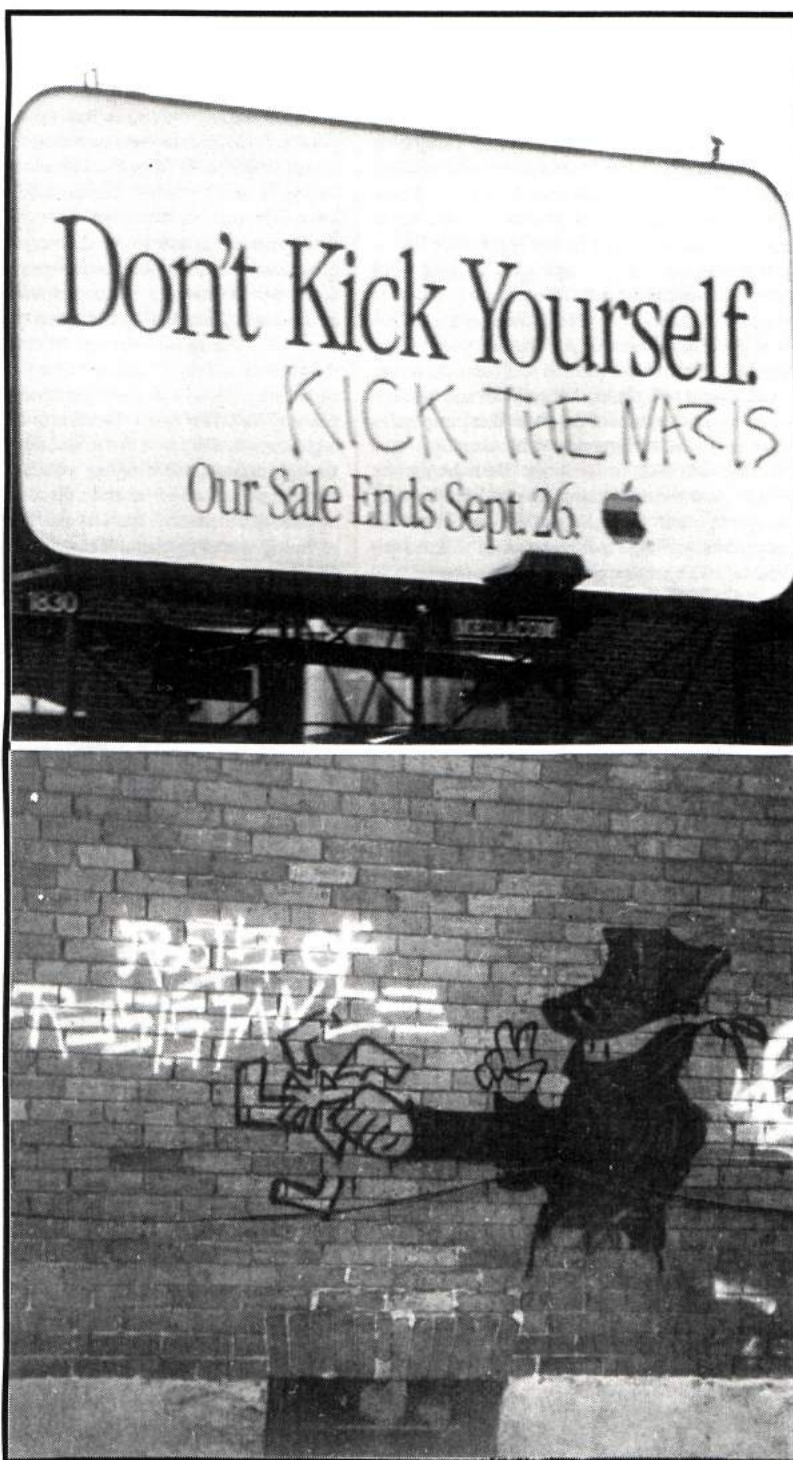
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Once again, after a long period of silence, we are back with a new issue of Arm The Spirit. With the publication of this issue we have, yet again, changed our format. When we originally started publishing Arm The Spirit in 1990 we had hoped to publish a monthly 4 page bulletin focusing on armed resistance and other militant struggles. Due to perpetual financial problems we were never quite able to keep to a monthly schedule. Despite these problems we managed to keep publishing and the size and content of each issue increased. Our last issue - 36 pages long - was a double issue. Now, once again, we have opted for a format change and have decided upon a 36 page magazine which will be published once or twice a year.

Our continuing problems in publishing the magazine have led us to start up an info bulletin which focuses on more up-to-date events and on-going struggles. To date we have published 4 issues covering everything from anti-fascism in Toronto, to the split in Devrimci Sol, the struggle against control unit prisons in the U.S., the recent developments around the Red Army Faction in Germany and much more (see below for more info).

In this issue of Arm The Spirit we have included many texts focusing on the rise of fascism in Europe and North America. From Europe we have a communique from Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action (RARA), a Dutch guerrilla organization, which addresses the issues of immigration and refugee/asylum policies and the need to attack the racist structures of the state. This perspective is also reiterated in an interview with members of a Revolutionary Cell (RZ) in Germany. Both groups see their militant actions as an integral part of a broader spectrum of anti-racist struggle that also challenges the racism and white privilege that is ingrained within society and the left. The articles on anti-fascist organizing in Toronto demonstrate the importance of building grassroots opposition through a variety of tactics, including militant actions, to hinder the growth of fascist/white-supremacist organizations. Militant actions, on whatever level, complement and work alongside other community

efforts within the framework of anti-racist organizing. These struggles, local and abroad, are each components in the spectrum of resistance to the causes and effects of racism and fascism.

The resurgence of fascism in many parts of the world has its roots in the intensification of racism and xenophobia which must be seen in the context of the "New World Order". All of this is taking place in a period which has seen the collapse of state "socialism" and increased exploitation of the "Third World" within the restructuring of international capital. This crisis has manifested itself in consistent patterns of imperialist violence in Somalia, ex-Yugoslavia and especially in the Gulf War. At the same time the left and other revolutionary movements have failed to respond to these developments. Many of the national liberation struggles have been sold-out by their so-called leaders even though the popular movements have continued to struggle. The recent events in El Salvador, Palestine and South Africa bear testimony to this. In Europe and North America the left has become all but redundant by refusing to develop new perspectives and by not challenging dogmatism and orthodoxy within its own structures. Most of the left continues to cling to outmoded models and pursues irrelevant and ineffective strategies and tactics. Despite this, there are those who are attempting to re-orient themselves and develop new strategies and methods of organizing. This is a common theme throughout this issue of Arm The Spirit. Whether it is basic grass-roots organizing in Toronto or re-evaluating the role of armed struggle in Europe or Uruguay we can see a process of re-evaluation, self-criticism and a discussion of revolutionary theory and practice at all levels. If we are to smash the re-emergence of fascism we must build movements that are rooted in an internationalist perspective that sees the world-wide interconnection of racism, patriarchy, imperialism and capitalism. Successful movements will be those that are built through a process that combines many methods of struggle and allows for a diversity of strategies and tactics. Clinging to the past and refusing to change will only bring us more defeats.

## Arm The Spirit Info Bulletin

We are now publishing a 8 page bi-monthly info bulletin available for \$12 for 12 issues (\$6 for 6 issues). It is a timely and up-to-date source of information about revolutionary resistance movements throughout the world. Back issues are available and include:

**Number 1 - June 1993:** Kurdish resistance, ARA, fascist violence in Germany, Devrimci Sol "split", RAF prison bombing and more.

**Number 2 - July/August 1993:** RARA press statement, anti-G7 actions in Japan, death of RAF guerilla Wolfgang Grams, Kurdistan update, European political prisoners, anti-cop riots in Paris and more.

**Number 3 - September/October 1993:** "The Fire Inside" by Ray Levasseur, Puerto Rican P.O.W.'s, an interview with European PKK representative, Kurdish news, letter from RAF prisoner, anti-Olympic resistance and more.

**Number 4 - November/December 1993:** RAF "split", ARA update, anti-fascism in Europe, political prisoner news and more.

We are working on a number of projects including a sporadic Kurdish newsletter, pamphlets on anti-fascism in Europe, "Three Into One: The Triple Oppression Of Racism, Sexism And Class" by ex-political prisoner (in Germany) Klaus Viehmann... As always we need support, particularly money, to make these projects a reality.

## Ad Rates

**1/6 page:** \$15.00 (5" wide x 2.5" high or 2.5" wide x 5" high)

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## Some Useful Information...

Editor: Gabriel Dumort

**Subscriptions:** \$10 for 4 issues (Cash or postal money orders - no cheques!). \$25.00 for 4 issues for libraries and other institutions.

**Distribution Rates:** A regular issue of Arm The Spirit is 36 pages long and has a \$2.00 cover price. If you order 10 or more copies you can get them for \$1.20 each (50 or more will cost \$.85 each). Please note that this does not include the cost of postage. We prefer cash upfront, but we're quite willing to work out consignment arrangements.

**Prisoner Subscriptions:** Due to our perpetually dire financial situation we are no longer capable of offering free subscriptions to prisoners. Prisoners, though, who are presently on our mailing list, will remain there.

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**Cover: Anti-racist graffiti in Toronto.**

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| 1/3 page |  | 1/6 page |
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# On The Prowl

## Anti-Racist Action And Developing Anti-Fascist Strategies In Toronto

by Lola

The growth of the far right in Toronto is not an new phenomenon. The Heritage Front is not the first Toronto-based fascist group but the most recent example of a movement which dates back to the 1930s: when the Canadian Nazi Party ran candidates in Toronto; when the Balmy Beach Club in the east end of the city was renamed the Swastika Club; when nazi thugs attacked Jewish youth at Christie Pits Park near downtown, youth who defended themselves and their community by physically tounding the nazi mob. Even the nazis of the 1930s cannot be isolated from the history of racism in Canada - from the genocidal policies used against the First Nations to the history of violent racism directed against the African and Asian communities.

This ongoing legacy of racism provides the fertile grounds for the growth of groups like the Heritage Front and Church of the Creator today. It's the historical context of racism which makes some white people vulnerable to these hateful organizations, and the strong links between groups in Canada, the U.S., Europe and South Africa make the white supremacist movement dangerous to us all.

It is often tempting to ignore neo-nazi organizing and violence. It is sometimes easier to see them as misfits or isolated extremists rather than face the larger problems of widespread racism, homophobia and anti-Semitism in society. But the first step to confronting hate violence is understanding how racism and prejudice has played a crucial role in the history of Canada, and how the struggles against it - from the time of Columbus to today - must inform and shape both our anti-racist analysis and activism.

### Who Are The People In Your Neighbourhood?

Many of us in Ontario see neo-nazi, Ku Klux Klan and other far right organizing as something that happens in the U.S.; or in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Quebec - yet southwestern Ontario is the most active area of organized white supremacy in Canada. The region is perhaps the organizational centre for the Canadian far right.

The leadership of the local neo-nazi movement is very experienced, many of them having worked with Toronto racist organizations since the 1970s and 1980s. Some have travelled internationally to meet and work with their European and U.S. counterparts. Many have done prison time for "the cause".

The main public figure in Toronto is Wolfgang Droege. Droege has been active in the Canadian far right since the 1970s when he worked in both the Toronto based Western Guard and later with the Canadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, where he rose to become the number two man in the national organization. Droege is a friend and "racial comrade" of both David Duke, the former KKK leader turned racist politician and U.S. Presidential candidate, and Tom Metzger, leader of the violent California-based White Aryan Resistance (WAR).

The Heritage Front was founded in 1988 when Droege and other white supremacists left the racist Nationalist Party of Canada. The Front bases itself on the National Association for the Advancement of White People, the organization formed by David Duke after leaving the Klan. The NAAWP presented itself not as a

white supremacist organization but as a "white separatist" group concerned with "equal rights for whites".

"Equal rights for whites" has become a popular slogan used by the right to justify attacks on the traditional targets of white supremacy. Under this banner, groups such as the Heritage Front denounce women's rights, non-white immigration, lesbian & gay rights, Native land rights and educational curriculum which stresses anti-racism or tells the history of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust - all of which in their minds adds up to a conspiracy to destroy the white race. Like the NAAWP, the Front hides the blatantly racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric of the past behind rants against immigration laws, crime, lesbian & gay rights, affirmative action, perceived attacks on (their) free speech, anti-racists, etc. in hopes of appealing to existing prejudices in white Canadian society.

The Heritage Front runs a telephone hotline which is used to broadcast verbal attacks against the communities which don't fit into their world vision - communities which in reality represent just about all of us. It also plays an essential role in recruitment as the initial public contact point for unaffiliated racists and fascists in the region. The Heritage Front also publish a monthly magazine called Upfront which carries articles by both Front members and fascist organizations in the U.S. and Europe. It even boasts a regular column by David Duke. The Front holds several secret rallies a year often featuring prominent KKK and neo-nazi leaders and Holocaust deniers from the U.S. and Europe. (The meetings are not advertised for fear of a massive anti-racist response, such as that organized by ARA in November 1992 which shut down a HF gathering.)

Despite their claims of merely seeking "free speech" and "open debate", the Heritage Front has time and time again revealed its true violent nature. In June 1993, three Front members, including Droege and his henchman Pete Mitrevski, were arrested on assault and weapons charges following an attempted assault of anti-racists. (An attempt which sent several fascists to hospital.) The other Front member arrested, Chris Newhook, has already been convicted and is now serving a 12 month sentence. Another Front diehard, Elisse Hategan, is facing charges of distributing hate material targeting the Black community.

Droege himself has already done prison time in the U.S. for his racist activities, including three years for his part in an attempted neo-nazi armed invasion of the island of Dominica, which was intended to establish a base for the international fascist movement. One of Droege's responsibilities after the invasion was to have been running a cocaine processing plant.

The flip side to the Heritage Front's "soft" image is the Church of the Creator (COTC), perhaps the most violent neo-nazi organization in North America. The COTC has chapters in the U.S., Canada, Europe and South Africa and is known for paramilitary training and



Anti-Fascist Demonstration Organized By ARA On January 25/93

using violent attacks as part of its efforts to make the earth a "whites-only" planet.

The "church" part of the organization is based upon the teachings of the millionaire racist and one time Ontario-resident, Ben Klassen (who took the Hitler-thing full circle in August 1993 by committing suicide). Klassen wrote the "White Man's Bible" which serves as the ideological/"spiritual" basis for COTC. It provides a "religious" excuse for their violence and hatred by teaching that white people alone are made in the image of god and that all other races (or "mud races" as they call them) are inferior.

The Toronto COTC is the organization's main representative in Canada and among the most important chapters internationally. COTC people from the Toronto/Hamilton area have played major roles in the international leadership and the most popular COTC rock band, RaHoWa (short for Racial Holy War), is based here. RaHoWa and other COTC bands are crucial in fundraising for their violent racist activities and in recruiting young people and skinheads as stormtroopers. The concerts pump up the bonehead fans with violent hatred and "siege heils", often resulting in assaults on the public after the shows let out. In June 1993, Heritage Front skinhead Jason Hoolans brutally assaulted a Tamil man after a RaHoWa gig, leaving the man partially paralysed.

Local COTC boss and RaHoWa "singer" George Burdi (aka Rev. Eric Hawthorne) recently helped found a Detroit-based record label called Resistance Records to make and distribute neo-nazi recordings across North America and Europe. The label's first release is a RaHoWa compact disc entitled "Declaration of War".

The Toronto COTC also boasts a Security Legion (or "White Berets"), a group of skinheads who train in martial arts and weapons and provide security for many neo-nazi events in the city. Toronto media recently identified Eric Fischer, a former sergeant in the Canadian Airborne Regiment, as the leader and trainer of the Security Legion. Eric, along with his brother and fellow Security Legions member, Elkar (another Airborne veteran), were arrested during the summer of 1993 with a third COTC bonehead for kidnapping a Heritage Front member, assaulting him, and threatening to kill him by injecting him with window cleaner. Another Security Legions member, Richard Manley, was recently sentenced to nine months in prison for illegal possession of weapons and ammunition. (He's another Airborne veteran... coincidence???)

The fact that the HF and COTC apparently use

different methods does not reflect a split but an attempt to build a broad racist front attracting all manner of potential recruits, from older bigots to younger militants. Not only do Burdi and Droege associate openly, but Burdi is often a prominent figure at Heritage Front rallies, where he either speaks or performs with his band. In April 1993, Burdi appeared with Droege at an Ottawa press conference announcing the launch of the Heritage Front's Ottawa chapter. It's apparent that Burdi (who was arrested for the May 1993 assault of an Ottawa anti-racist) is effectively the number two man in the HF.

The Heritage Front also acts as a front for the movement. As a public organization, unlike the secretive COTC, the Heritage Front is a contact point for newly initiated racists and fascists who can later be directed towards more violent groups.

The primary recruiting ground for both these organizations is young white people. It is from these ranks that the fascists, as they have done in Europe, hope to draw their stormtroopers. In this effort, local high schools have become one of the major political battle grounds of the 1990s.

## On The Prowl

Anti-Racist Action (ARA) formed in the Fall of 1992 to organize a street level presence to oppose the growth of the fascist movement in Toronto. The primary impetus came from young people, many of them high school students. Their main objectives were to oppose the neo-nazi presence in both the political and social arenas. The former was to take place in the high schools, where the Heritage Front were and are actively recruiting young people. The latter was to confront them in clubs, bars and other social arenas where skinheads and neo-nazi bands were beginning to build a presence and to physically attack people of colour, anti-racists and punks.

While the focus was clearly on youth organizing, ARA also set about to explore new and creative methods of organizing and to expand the boundaries of the traditional forms of protest in Toronto. The young activists saw the need to challenge what they saw as depressing, disempowering, and ultimately ineffective modes of protest which the left has fallen into. ARA aimed to move away from boring pickets in front of faceless buildings and instead build a militant street level movement to fight grassroots fascism which would at the same time work in coalition with other groups around broader issues.

Along with the critique of the mobilization strategies of the left, ARA also incorporates an inherent challenge to traditional political dogmas. Distrust of old-style ideological restrictions led to the creation of a political perspective which, in essence, borrows from the best of many traditions. Elements from anarchism, marxism, the German Autonomes, First Nations organizing, and popular culture are synthesized within ARA to create a political perspective which speaks to the people involved and allows the group to look beyond the constraints of any one tradition to attempt to create a new way of working politically.

A central element to the overall ARA approach is the cultivation of an anti-racist/anti-fascist counterculture. This has proceeded primarily through the organizing of regular Rock Against Racism concerts and also weekend parties, as well as the creation of an ARA "style". The group also actively circulates buttons and T-shirts [the group's motto is "On The Prowl" and their logo

is a tiger leaping on a swastika]. ARA has recognized that one of the main attractions which the nazis have for young people is the sense of both rebelliousness and community which such organizations provide. The nazis certainly recognize this dynamic, which is why they have put so much effort into developing neo-nazi bands as recruiting instruments. ARA realizes that if it is to be effective politically, it also has to be "hip".

Few young people are attracted to fascist organizations on the basis of ideology alone. Most are attracted to the cultural scene first, through the music, parties, or friends and only later drawn into the movement and its ideas. Rather than ignore this reality, ARA has actively sought to promote a compelling, vibrant, and fun culture of resistance to attract young people and provide an alternative to the nazis. At the same time, the providing of an active social element to a political organization helps not only to keep activists and others interested but also provides a forum for people to build up the friendship and trust necessary for effective political work.

ARA demonstrations have been more militant and confrontational than has traditionally been the case in Toronto. The events have consistently drawn large

nazis to walk past and into the front doors of the court. Several demonstrators required brief hospitalization.

During the media circus which followed, both Police Chief William McCormack and Metro Police Services Board chair Susan Eng admitted in the press that the reason the nazis were not taken in through one of the four alternative entrances was because Droege demanded to be taken in the main doors (which raises the question of who is actually giving the order for police to attack anti-racists?).

Inside the courtroom itself, police continued their attacks by assaulting members of the American Indian Movement who were acting as security for Native Centre representative, Rodney Bobiwash. AIM members were thrown to the floor by police and handcuffed after they intervened to protect Bobiwash from an assault by Heritage Front supporters. After the demonstration, two ARA members were arrested on their way home on bogus charges of assaulting police, one for allegedly throwing an egg the other for spitting. (The two anti-fascists, one of whom was a minor at the time of the incident, were eventually convicted of lesser charges and received probation).

The persons targeted for arrest are significant. Both were on the front line of the demonstration and played active roles in repelling the horse charge, and one was also the final public ARA speaker at the demonstration dispersal point.

Despite the police attack and the arrests, most saw the demonstration as a huge success. Not only did anti-racists outnumber the nazis by more than ten to one, but the attack clearly revealed on which side the police stood. The aftermath of the 25th also revealed on which side other anti-racist organizations fall in a crisis.

On January 27th, both the Human Rights League of B'nai Brith and the Canadian Jewish Congress denounced the demonstration in the media. Karen Mock, national spokesperson for B'nai Brith, accused ARA of "jumping on a bandwagon and using this high profile anti-racist initiative to attempt to create disorder and

take the law in their own hands."

Gerda Frieberg of the CJC stated that "The Canadian Jewish Congress does not support these kind of actions." It was clear to some that the self-serving media ploy by B'nai Brith and CJC was intended more to solidify and justify their own close working relationships with police rather than advance the anti-racist movement. Indeed, recent revelations in the U.S. of Anti-Defamation League (B'nai Brith's U.S. counterpart) collaboration with the San Francisco Police Department in spying on progressive and leftist organizations should certainly make committed anti-racists in Toronto wary of that organization's true political goals.

The denunciation by these organizations was also significant in that it played directly to the police and media propaganda line of separating "legitimate" anti-racist groups from "illegitimate" ones, thereby hoping to criminalize ARA and justify unprovoked police violence against the demonstration. However, much of that attempt was derailed in the community, if not in the press itself, by the fact that such "legitimate" groups as the Native Canadian Centre and the Montreal-based Canadian Centre on Racism and Prejudice (as well as representatives from the Black community, women's movement, and labour movement) supported ARA completely and publicly denounced the police's actions.

Although ARA continued to organize actions fol-

# SMASH THE NAZI FRONT

On January 25 neo-nazi hate groups will march on a Human Rights hearing to intimidate and silence those who speak out against racism and hatred. Anti-racists will gather at the south end of Queen's Park at 8:15 a.m. to march on the courts and confront Toronto's fascist movement.

## NO to racism, NO to fascism, NEVER AGAIN

### ANTI-RACIST ACTION

*The Heritage Front's telephone Hotline is facing a challenge under the Ontario Human Rights Code.*



numbers and their atmosphere of anger and a willingness to meet the fascists face-to-face have both intimidated the neo-nazis while attracting the attention of the police and the press.

For example, a large and determined demonstration in November 1992 outside a "secret" Heritage Front meeting at the Roma Restaurant caused the police to shut the meeting down. Angry nazis were forced to flee under police protection while at the same time trying to avoid the hail of eggs thrown at them by the demonstrators.

A January 25, 1993 demonstration called outside a Toronto courthouse was to be a pivotal moment in shaping the organization. The Canadian Human Rights Commission has been in the process of hearing a complaint brought by the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto against the Front's telephone hotline. An announced fascist march on the courthouse in support of the Heritage Front was met by an ARA demonstration of over 500 people who blocked the main doors to the building.

Rather than take the small contingent of nazis into the courthouse through the back door, the police instead chose to charge the anti-racists from two sides. Mounted police rode into the front line of the demonstration, trampling people and whacking them with riding crops, while officers on foot rushed into one side, kicking and punching anti-racists as they did so. The "reason" for the attack was to move the ARA demonstration to allow the

lowing the January 25th police attack, including demonstrations against local school teacher Paul Fromm, who has been active in the Toronto far-Right for the past 25 years, the next major event did not occur until June 11th.

#### Behind The Front

While the Heritage Front and the Church of the Creator maintain publicly that they are not violent groups but are merely interested in open debate on the issues, their behaviour to date reveals quite the opposite. In response to community action on many levels against the HF and COTC, the nazis have slowly been waging an escalating terror campaign against anti-racists. This campaign has primarily manifested itself in patterns of harassment and intimidation, but has recently moved into violent physical attacks.

The campaign began in the fall of 1992. On the night of November 28th, nazis painted swastikas outside several prominent anti-racist targets in Toronto including the Native Canadian Centre and a socialist bookstore. Other targets hit at that same time which were not mentioned in media reports were KYTES, a community theatre and employment centre in Kensington Market which at that time was serving as ARA's regular meeting place, as well as the home of an ARA member.

This was followed quite quickly by a campaign of harassing and later threatening phone calls to some ARA members. While several people received calls, the fascists chose to concentrate their efforts against women. This targeting of women has been their pattern since that time, an obvious reflection of their inherent misogyny. While men have received calls, the harassment for the most part has not been of the same violent intensity as that against women and has not continued past a period of two weeks.

One woman was also targeted physically for surveillance, and the nazis placed people in cars outside her home to follow her and track her movements, who she met with, etc. Another woman was the subject of a racist flyer containing attacks against the Black community while listing her name, address, and phone number as the contact person for the fictitious white supremacist group which claimed authorship of the flyer. The intention was to give the false impression that the anti-racist activist was a nazi and thereby subject her to harassment from members of the community.

These attacks soon escalated from intimidation tactics to physical assault and arson. During the spring a campaign of terror was waged against Youthlink, two shelters for young women. Early in 1993 a Heritage Front member who was a resident of the shelter was ejected by the staff for intimidating other residents by wearing nazi paraphernalia and bringing racist materials into the shelter.

The nazis responded to this by launching a series of homophobic attacks against Youthlink staff on their hotline. A campaign of threatening phone calls and physical surveillance of staff ensued which eventually culminated in an arson attack against one of the shelters in late March. A staff member was also assaulted in her home by skinheads. During that same period, a member of the Black Action Defence Committee (the main Toronto group organizing against police racism and violence) was attacked by five nazis one evening after leaving the BADC office.

In our analysis, this slow and deliberate escalation of violence is not haphazard but calculated. The slow escalation has two identifiable goals for the movement. The first is to test the response of police. The nazis need to see how far they can push things before feeling pressure from law enforcement. Thus far, the fascists have received little or no interest from police in regards to these attacks. The Heritage Front is also testing the resolve of anti-racist forces, again to see what the response will be from the left. Unfortunately, apart from a few significant solidarity links being made between anti-racist and other

community organizations, the response has similarly been quiet.

The second goal for the fascists is simply practice. We know that the nazis engage in various forms of physical and paramilitary training both in the Toronto area and with contacts in the U.S. This slow escalation is allowing their stormtroopers to put their training into practice in increasingly violent scenarios. This again allows the fascists to test their own capabilities and the commitment of different individuals, while also learning and preparing for what they see as the soon to begin Racial Holy War. As the summer grew closer, the nazis began to dramatically increase the level of violence. As mentioned earlier, in April the Heritage Front announced the formation of an Ottawa chapter. The inaugural event of the Ottawa HF was to be a "Rock for Racism" concert to be held on May 29th featuring Canadian Neo-nazi bands RaHoWa and Aryan.

Anti-racists in Ottawa quickly began to mobilize against the proposed concert, eventually forming a coalition among various groups. ARA was invited to send a delegation from Toronto, and about 50 anti-fascists made the trip by bus. Despite gathering a crowd of 600 to confront the nazis, the liberalism and collaboration with police on the part of some of the coalition organizers plagued the action from the start (the specifics of which are discussed later). This conflict between liberal and militant elements among the demonstrators eventually led to a situation where many of the people wanting to confront the nazis and close down the concert were abandoned by the demo organizers, resulting in violent attacks on the few local anti-racists left behind at the scene. Skinheads brutally beat several demonstrators, hospitalizing half a dozen. The hundred nazis present then marched on the Canadian Parliament building where leader Droege announced to the "seig heiling" crowd that one day these buildings would be theirs.

The Heritage Front and COTC clearly saw the events of May 29th as a victory which provided a major boost to their morale. They crowed about their victory in Ottawa over their hotline for days and there was a marked increase in violent neo-nazi attacks in Toronto, particularly directed against the Tamil community. The week following Ottawa, a Heritage Front skinhead named Jason Hoolans brutally beat a Tamil man outside a Toronto restaurant, resulting in the man's being hospitalized and partially paralysed. Hoolans was on his way home from a RaHoWa gig in the north of the city when the attack occurred.

#### Shut 'Em Down

It was in this context of increasing violence and displays of bravado by the neo-nazis that ARA's next action took place. A demonstration was called for June 11th to march on a neo-nazi centre of operations. The actual destination of the demo was unknown except to a few ARA organizers. The rationale for the secret destination was a tactical one - if ARA announced the exact destination, the demonstrators would most likely encounter not only a sizeable and armed contingent of skinheads but also an even more sizeable and better armed contingent of police. Rather than tangle with cops on horseback again, ARA chose a different strategy.

Organizers chose as the meeting place a commu-

## REACT TO FASCIST ATTACKS SHUT 'EM DOWN

Over 500 hate crimes are committed every year in Toronto. White supremacists are showing their ugly face - and violent acts by local Nazis are escalating.

For example:

- **ARSON** attack and terror campaign on residence for young women
- **ASSAULT:** Five-on-one physical attack on Black community activist
- **HARASSMENT:** continued threats to anti-racists

### JUNE 11, 1993 - WE FIGHT BACK.

Assemble at John Innes Community Centre,  
Sherbourne and Queen Sts.

Friday 7:00 pm sharp  
to march on a Nazi  
centre of operation



## ANTI-RACIST ACTION

P.O. BOX 664, STN. C, TORONTO, ONT. M6J 351

co-sponsored by Toronto Anti-Racist Youth Initiative

nity centre only four blocks south of the home of prominent nazi publisher Ernst Zundel. Zundel's home is a well known location in the city and, as one of the main suppliers of hate material internationally, his home/office is of major significance to both fascists and anti-fascists. Because of the location of the meeting place, dozens of police gathered outside Zundel's house (which had been covered in plastic by its owner to protect it from the expected onslaught of eggs and paint bombs.) Fifty or more skinheads were also present to "defend Zundel's house" from anti-fascist attack - an attack which never materialized when, to the surprise and outrage of the cops and nazis, the ARA demonstration piled onto streetcars and headed east to the home of Gary Schipper - the voice of the Heritage Front hateline.

As the phalanx of 300 demonstrators marched up the residential street, ARA marshals passed out information flyers to the participants identifying the still secret site and the reasons for the action. Other ARA people went door-to-door to pass out similar flyers containing Schipper's photo and address to the residents of the largely immigrant neighbourhood and explain to them the intentions of the demonstration.

After reaching the house, with eggs flying through the air, a dozen or more demonstrators expressed their outrage in a more direct fashion by rushing the house and smashing windows. After the direct action was over, and the speeches had been completed, the demonstration withdrew from the neighbourhood. In one instant, the fight had been taken right to the nazis' door in a way that had not occurred anywhere else in Canada. The implications for the fascists were clear - we knew who they were, we knew their faces, we knew where they lived and where they met, and we would not be intimidated by their violence.

A controlled expression of community anger had been accomplished, one which made that anger and resolve clear in a direct and militant fashion, yet one so controlled and disciplined on the part of demonstrators that no other residents' property was damaged. No parked cars were touched, no other homes were touched, no gardens were trampled - only one building was the target, and that target was identified and dealt with.

Because the Zundel bluff was so effective, no nazis were there and so few cops that the demonstrators were allowed to enter and leave the neighbourhood without incident (Except for Heritage Front leader Wolfgang Droege appearing in his car with 5 skinheads to verbally threaten demonstrators waiting to disperse afterwards. Mr. Droege received a smashed windshield for his efforts and his small gang quickly sped away.)

Late that evening - in a poorly planned and executed attempt at retaliation - a gang of thirty skinheads armed with baseball bats converged on a popular club frequented by ARA people and other anti-racists. The location was doubly significant in that the club itself had been a popular nazi hang-out until they were driven out by local anti-racists a few months earlier.

Despite being outnumbered three to one, the few anti-racists present defended themselves and chased the skinheads out. Several nazis, including leader Droege, were beaten and hospitalized. Droege was later to be arrested and charged with aggravated assault on one of two anti-racists seriously injured. Also arrested that night was another Heritage Front leader named Pete Mitrevski and a skinhead named Chris Newhook. Newhook has since been convicted of assaulting police and possession of a dangerous weapon (a baseball bat with "SS" carved into it) and was sentenced to twelve months.

The response to the events of June 11th was swift from all directions. The media, as could be expected, had a field day condemning ARA as terrorists adopting the same tactics as the fascists, etc, etc. However, what separated this action from January 25th, at least in the media, was that no non-governmental anti-racist organization dared publicly denounce ARA or the June 11th action. While this did not stop various columnists from venting their misplaced moral outrage for several weeks following the demo, it did make the criticisms ring quite hollow when even the most conservative of anti-racist groups would not join the reporters' crusade.

A sampling of the public comments by other anti-racists went:

**"Extreme...but justified" - Dudley Laws, Black Action Defense Committee**

**"The problem is... the police and the attorney general's office have not been co-operating. They haven't used legislation as a means to stop hate-mongering. Young people... understandably get very frustrated and wrongly take the law into their own hands. I really hold the people who are in the position of authority responsible at this point because they have chosen to do nothing [about hate crimes]." - Bernie Farber, Canadian Jewish Congress**

**"If the rallying cry for all anti-racists is 'Never Again' then no one is pressing this at the moment any more than activist groups such as ARA. If Canadian governmental authority proves to be as incapable in stemming racially motivated crime and fascist political organization as the German governments of the 30s and today, then the unthinkable resurgence of organized Nazism may be literally at our doorstep. The unfortunate excesses of the June 11 rally may be cause for some concern, but it does not begin to compare in significance or gravity with such an eventuality." - Roger Hollander, Metro Councillor**

**"It is the Heritage Front, Church of the Creator and other racist groups that have carried on a violent campaign of intimidation over the last several months - all the while proclaiming their virtue....Anti-racists are responding to**

**a wave of violence created by racists. While the merits and demerits of property damage can be debated, it is far from the deadly and physical violence of the Front." - Rodney Bobiwash, Klanbusters**

It was interesting in that the most vociferous opposition and denunciation of ARA after June 11th came from more progressive sectors of the community, mainly revolving (whether admitted or not) around the question of militancy.

This kind of criticism is an unfortunate tradition of the North American left. It seems that all too many are comfortable in supporting militancy everywhere but their own backyards. This tendency was certainly obvious in the response of the left to the development of

tively confrontational.

ARA recognizes that doing anti-fascist work is unlike most other political struggles in the Canadian context (outside of Native Territory) in that there is a very real element of physical retaliation - in this case by nazis. Rather than choose the easy path of staging irrelevant picket lines which present no threat to fascist organizing, ARA chooses to take the fight right to the nazis - in the schools, in nazi socializing places, at their meetings, at their homes. Because of this strategy, ARA demonstrations cannot be social events because of the need for the security.

Unlike any other organizations in the city, ARA demonstrators march in ranks with their arms linked to help strengthen the formation and ensure that there are no

people left isolated and vulnerable - to police intimidation, arrest, nazi attack, or fascist surveillance. ARA also takes a defensive marshalling strategy. While most Canadian demonstrations have marshals in place to protect property from demonstrators so that their cause is not "discredited" by the actions of some "unruly elements", ARA's marshals are there to protect the body of the demonstration against attack - whether that comes from the nazis or police. The marshals are also there to prevent surveillance from fascists (who, as elsewhere, like to show up and videotape and photograph anti-racists).

Some critics denounced ARA for allowing such expressions of militancy to occur at all - for not holding back activists who felt the need to take more direct forms of action. In a community statement issued by ARA to respond to such critiques it was stated:

**"During the demonstration, some anti-racist protestors struck back against Gary Schipper and the Heritage Front. Paint bombs and rocks were thrown at his residence and windows were broken. Although these acts of vandalism were not planned by ARA, our group allows people to express their anger against fascism and white supremacy as they see fit. We do not police anti-racists."**

In the aftermath of the demonstration, four anti-racists were arrested on charges of mischief to property and disguising with the intention of committing an indictable offense. The arrests of the four did not occur on the site of the demonstration but happened arbitrarily over the ensuing two weeks. One woman was arrested at a local radio station after representing ARA on a call-in show. Two others were picked-up while attending a subsequent anti-racist demonstration. Despite being arrested on different dates and in different parts of the city,

all four were picked up by the same two undercover officers, indicating a coordinated police effort to identify and target ARA activists.

The bail conditions imposed on the four were clearly politically motivated and intended to curtail their anti-racist activism. The initial conditions (most of which have since been changed through legal challenges) included non-association with other members of ARA; barring from attendance at ARA or other anti-racist meetings; and barring from attendance at any demonstration in the entire province of Ontario. These conditions are more restrictive than those given to Heritage Front and COTC members charged with aggravated assault, forcible confinement and weapons offenses.

The action against Schipper's house on June 11th occurred as a direct response to an escalation of fascist violence and public organizing. As such, the action succeeded in accomplishing several goals, both through the

## UNWANTED

### HATEMONGERS IN THE CITY

who promote hate crimes against the world majority: black, asian, native, south asian, jewish, gypsy, gay, lesbian, queer, psychiatricized, disabled, feminists, anti-racists, anybody who ISN'T and/or DOESN'T WANT to be part of the white straight male supremacist kkkulture



**ERNST ZUNDEL**  
Holocaust denier, peddler of hate literature to Germany. Only likes conditions when they're big enough to cover his house to protect it from anti-racists. Has enough money to stay out of jail.



**WOLFGANG DROEGE**  
Rabid leader of the fascist Heritage Front, but sometimes his followers don't follow, resulting in beat injuries. Rumoured to be jealous of George Burdi's singing voice.



**GEORGE BURDI**  
AKA Rev. Eric Hawthorne, leader of Church of the Creator, a paramilitary group trying to break into rock'n'roll. Has been lying in beanbags out of the sun for most of the summer, in order to stay REALLY WHITE. Rumoured to be jealous of Worf's ability to get along without Chewbacca.



**KEN BARKER**  
Thinks he should get more media coverage, but can't think of what to say. Heard that bigotry causes impotence but thought "impotence" meant being important to a lot of people. Runs "Equal Rights for Whome" hotline.



**ELISSE HATEGAN AKA DESHNER**  
The Heritage Front's whiskey when women, gets shot work late reconnaissance and spying but hasn't figured out how to disguise herself yet. Cries a lot but femininity serves the "white" cause by distributing anti-black hate literature.



**PETER MITREVSKI**  
Wolfgang's bodyguard, lives in a P.O. box. Formerly a skinhead, figures nobody will think he's gay if he sticks around with the "white rights" types. Cheats on her clothes, Peter!



**GARY SCHIPPER**  
The voice of the HF Hotline, but has done permanent damage to his own vocal chords trying to sing along with Kelt/Wh. Currently looking for a shirt-proof snout, but his scribble taste in clothes might tip off the landlord as to who he is.



**ERIK FISCHER**  
Head of "security and intelligence" for both the Church of the Creator and the Heritage Front, idea of fun threatening date own people with deadly injections of windshield fluid. Rumour has it his "intelligence" is always questionable.



## ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FASCISTS

### DENY ANY SPACE FOR THEM IN TORONTO

armed organizations in the U.S. and Canada during the 1970s and 1980s. (See Ward Churchill's essay "Pacifism as Pathology" in *Issues in Radical Therapy* for an excellent analysis of this phenomenon.) Indeed, it seems pathetic commentary on the Canadian left (and on the level of self-policing done by Canadian progressive movements) that a bit of egg throwing and a few broken windows are seen as acts of violence. As was said to one ARA critic by a South Asian comrade, "It's only within the confines set by the white Canadian left that June 11th can be seen as a violent demonstration."

The unfortunate fact is that for most leftists in Canada, demonstrations have become social events. They are forums for people to come together, meet their friends, chat while the speeches are going on and then leave in groups for the nearest bar after (and often before) the demo has finished. ARA's demonstrations consciously challenge this comfortable norm by being ac-

demonstrate itself and the resulting Nazi tactical mistake made in response - namely attempting the mass assault against ARA people later that evening. The assault attempt failed miserably on two levels: 1) the fascists were humiliated in their attempt to boost morale and look tough after being fooled by a classic "bait and switch" and 2) it resulted in the arrests of two key Front leaders. The main effects of the day's events was to force the Nazis to turn their organizing inward rather than towards expansion. Planned summer recruiting drives were put on hold due to the legal restrictions placed on some of their key activists following their arrests. Funding for a planned national summer tour by RaHoWa and the opening of a public office space was eaten up by bail costs and lawyer fees.

Despite the critiques of some about June 11th action, this single event and its aftermath was responsible for the significant decrease in fascist activity and violence during the past four months.

## Policing The Crisis?

As always, the role of the police and the intervention of state agencies within a political struggle is multifaceted and often difficult to negotiate both internally and externally in the broader movement. This is no less true in anti-fascist organizing in Toronto. An analysis of the police approach to the movements, both racist and anti-racist, is essential to begin to develop effective strategies.

While the problem of police interference in political organizing is not a new one, it must be understood that the police play a particular dynamic within the context of anti-fascist work which is quite different than in other struggles. This is because in other progressive or radical movements, the question of involving the police as a potential "ally" within the struggle is non-existent. Whether it is organizing around such issues of institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia or domestic and foreign policies of the Canadian government, it is clearly recognized that the police as an institution play no potential positive role in advancing the cause.

This is unfortunately not the case with anti-fascist organizing. The activities of neo-Nazi groups are by definition violent, whether through actual physical attacks or by the implied threat which their presence presents to those communities which have historically been targets of fascism. Their organizing also involves illegal activities, from relatively minor incidents of vandalism to more serious acts of violence including assault, arson, paramilitary training and murder. Because of this reality, many anti-racists see the police as an option against neo-Nazis.

This double vision with regards to the police is both problematic and dangerous. While most are quick to recognize police violence and direct hostility, as was demonstrated during the demonstration on January 25th (with the exception elements of the "legitimate" and conservative anti-racist movement), there remains a strong trend which looks towards legal "remedies" for white supremacy. This trend takes the form not only of desires for stronger laws against hate group activities, but in particular looking towards police for protection.

The willingness to look to police as a strategy usually falls along clear lines of race and class. Certainly those individuals and communities who have not traditionally suffered at the hands of police are more likely to view them as "protectors" rather than oppressors. Therefore it has usually been the anti-racist groups representing these privileged interests which have been urging residents to call police when they encounter racist activity in their community. One Ontario government anti-racism organization has even gone so far as to publish a pamphlet which argues the "call police" strategy while printing on the cover a photo of ARA's January 25th demonstration (without permission, I might add) where mounted police attacked anti-racists to protect neo-Nazis.

However, one need only look at the police's atti-

tudes and actions to date to see quite clearly that they are much more interested in attacking and criminalizing anti-racists than they are neo-Nazis. While the mounted police attack against ARA and police assault of AIM members on January 25th is the most blatant example of this, we can go further in revealing the clear pattern of police indifference to fascist attacks.

The most obvious aspect of the police approach is the clear double-standard used in investigating Nazis and anti-racists. The police have demonstrated time and time again their desire to shelter Wolfgang Droege and the Heritage Front as an organization from the supposedly "random" and "unconnected" acts of their supporters. In the two most violent incidents to date, the 1992 bombing of the Toronto Morgentaler abortion clinic and the 1993 firebombing of Youthlink, the police have allowed Droege's denials of HF involvement to stand at face value.

In the Morgentaler case, neo-Nazi graffiti stating "Peace, Love & White Power" along with the Heritage Front's telephone number was painted on a large wall directly across the street from the bombed clinic. The graffiti was done sometime between 1:00am and 4:00am (the approximate time of the blast) on the night of the bombing. The connection to most would seem quite clear. However, the media revealed that police investigators interviewed Droege and essentially accepted his claim that the Heritage Front was not involved.

Over a year later, police have still not made any arrests despite admitting in the press that the perpetrators were videotaped by the clinic's security system. Certainly the history of state and police attacks against the left reveals that a similar set of circumstances involving a right-wing or government target would have resulted in mass repression. In that case, it seems that if Droege were a leftist he would have been answering questions from a jail cell, assumed guilty until proven innocent. In a similar manner, Droege was allowed to shrug off any involvement or responsibility for the arson attack at Youthlink. While admitting to a Toronto magazine that the Heritage Front did wage a homophobic campaign against the shelter on their hotline, he says that his group had no hand in nor responsibility for the attack. Again this claim to be "uninvolved" has apparently been accepted by the police, who are choosing to ignore a months long, sophisticated and coordinated campaign of harassment and surveillance of the shelter and its employees. This clearly was not the work of a "lone nut", and the police's apparent readiness to accept it as such is yet another demonstration of their unwillingness to go after the fascists as organizations but instead to individualize attacks which are clearly coordinated. Police have even refused to fully investigate the assaulting of a Youthlink staffer by skinheads, choosing instead to charge the woman herself for filing a false complaint!

In each case, "investigators" seem unwilling or uninterested in uncovering connections and links to the Heritage Front or other organizations, but prefer to operate on the basis that the perpetrator is acted in isolation. Yet, at the same time as they shrug off interest in the hierarchy and organizational structure of the Right, the police seem quite interested in identifying such areas in the anti-racist movement.

In fact, instead of being committed to prosecuting neo-Nazis, it has been the pattern to date that the police have a much greater interest in investigating ARA. The placement (and later expulsion) of a known agent provocateur early in the organization's life was one indication of state intentions towards the group (a provocateur who now spends his time spreading accusations of homophobia and queer-bashing against ARA in an attempt to drive wedges between the group and the lesbian and gay

community, a community from which ARA has drawn some of its strongest participation and support). Subsequent events involving the actual prosecution of a high profile Heritage Front spokesperson have been even more revealing. This case has demonstrated concretely that any move by anti-racists to lay charges or make reports to police merely opens the door for police intelligence gathering on the organization and its membership.

Elisse Hategan (aka Deschner) was to face trial in June 1993 on charges of inflammatory libel against a local anti-racist and distributing hate literature. [Editorial Note: Since the writing of this article Hategan's trial date had been moved to 9/31/24. At this time it was revealed that she had defected from the HF. She is now passing information about HF activities and attacks to anti-racist groups and police.] She was being accused of distributing the earlier mentioned racist flyer intended to paint an anti-racist activist as a Nazi. Interestingly, the police "investigation" of Hategan, as evidenced through their interviews of other anti-racists called as witnesses in the case, consisted primarily of police attempts to obtain the names of other anti-racist activists and trace structures and chains of communication within the movement.

The case itself provides an ideal cover for such a ruse, for it gives the police authority to subpoena anti-racists and interview them about their work while hiding such probing behind the facade of "prosecuting hate crimes". In fact, it is the suspicion of many that the recent creation of the much publicized "Hate Crimes Unit" within the Metro Police is in itself nothing more than a cover to gather intelligence on the anti-racist movement.

Hategan has been allowed to associate with known members of the Heritage Front in direct contravention of her bail conditions. In fact, in one incident she appeared at an ARA demonstration in a car with known leaders of the Heritage Front and COTC. This situation was immediately noticed by Rodney Bobiwash of the Native Centre. Knowing that the violation should immediately result in her re-arrest and revocation of bail, he notified the officer commanding the police presence at the demonstration, who replied "I don't care." This incident speaks volumes to the reluctance of the police to truly prosecute neo-Nazis and to the illegitimacy of the police investigation against Hategan.

The interviewing and subpoenaing of activists continues despite that fact that Hategan has apparently admitted to distributing the



# ANTI-RACIST ACTION

flyer and will presumably pursue a defence based on freedom of speech. It is also significant that by calling anti-racists as witnesses, and thereby revealing their identities to the court and to the nazis, the police are knowingly opening up these individuals for harassment. The conjecture is that such a decision is calculated to place these individuals in jeopardy so that the police can 1) gather intelligence on the fascists by using the anti-racists as "bait", and 2) hope that individuals will turn to the police for protection, thereby creating an opportunity for further intelligence gathering on the anti-racist movement.

These suspicions were reinforced during the pre-trial hearing in October when Hategan's attorney cross examined one of the anti-racist witnesses. Lawyer Harry Doan (who is defending most of the nazis facing charges in the city) spent most of his time asking questions about ARA's organizing - the names of activists, the names of the organizers of the January 25th and June 11th demonstrations, etc. While obviously unrelated to the charges against Hategan, the Crown prosecutor did not object to this line of questioning. The witness was unable to provide Doan with the information he wanted.

Unfortunately, the unwillingness of some to see use of the police as being at best a tactical decision in certain situations rather than a parental-type figure to protect us from bullies is problematic and dangerous. Indeed, people who will go to the police out of trust and reformist beliefs in the system are dangerous for any radical organization which constitutes itself in opposition to that very system. These are often the people who will, perhaps unwittingly, do the job of the police by speaking openly about membership and strategies in some misguided sense that the police, while problematic on some levels, are allies against the nazis. The evidence to date shows us exactly the opposite.

## When Opportunism Knocks

Because of the early successes of ARA, the organization inevitably sparked the interest of various Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist political parties who began to flock to ARA like moths to a bright light. Unfortunately, it soon became obvious that most were involved not to work honestly against the neo-nazi presence in Toronto but instead to forward the goals of their own organizations.

As has been the experience of many groups who have tried to do political work around various issues, the presence of these party organizations soon becomes an obstacle to building the organization as a whole. The International Socialists (I.S.) in particular played a prominent role in opposing every demonstration (except one) that was ever undertaken by ARA against the far right, while at the same time trying to push through their own proposals which better suited the ends of their party. This behaviour was later discovered to be in keeping with their own political mandate to provide "revolutionary leadership" to organizations of "movementists", who while presumably understanding their own issue, did not have the same vision and understanding of the party on how to defeat the state.

Eventually, after several months of attempting to work in good faith, the International Socialists were voted out of ARA by a 2/3 majority of ARA members. This had the result of causing all the other Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist parties to leave the group en masse in support of the I.S. While this on the whole was positive in that it saved ARA the similarly obstructionist and opportunist behaviour of the other groups, such as the Trotskyist League and the Bolshevik Tendency, it also caused the loss of a few individual comrades who had risen above their party's dogma to do principled and solid work within ARA.

I.S. attempts to denounce ARA did not cease after their expulsion, but continue in various forms. During the Ottawa demonstration in May, it was the I.S. contingent who actively collaborated with the police against militant

demonstrators. I.S. marshals tipped off the cops to an attempt by ARA and other anti-racists to rush past police lines to get closer to the building where the nazi concert was being held. This tip off resulted in many of those demonstrators on the front lines being hit with pepper spray by police.

Later the I.S. marshals purposefully split the demonstration by declaring "victory" because the cops told them that the concert was going to be shut down. This declaration over the megaphones, coupled with the herding of the participants by I.S. marshals, caused more than half of the demonstrators to leave the site. Many anti-racists refused to acknowledge that any such victory existed when the sounds of the nazi bands playing could clearly be heard even outside the building. This cowardly decision to split the demonstration (and the fact that the ARA contingent of 50 who had stayed behind at the site were forced to leave at 11:00pm to catch the bus back to Toronto) left the few dedicated Ottawa activists vulnerable to the brutal skinhead attack which followed.

Before the June 11th demonstration, the I.S. had made plans to cause a disturbance at the gathering site by demanding that ARA organizers reveal the secret destination of the demonstration (this despite the fact that all the advertising for the action made it clear that, while the demonstration would be going to a neo-nazi centre of operations, the actual destination would not be known until the group arrived there). After the demonstration, in a move reminiscent of COINTELPRO-style tactics, the I.S. took part in drafting a letter condemning ARA for the "violence" of the June 11th action - a letter to which they signed the names of several organizations who, upon being contacted by ARA, had never heard of such a letter and who did not support the statements within it.

Unfortunately, it was not only groups within ARA who have demonstrated similar opportunist and patronizing attitudes towards the organization. While some in the broader left see the formation and effectiveness of ARA as a positive development, at the same time they dismiss the relevancy of anti-fascist work and maintain that ARA should be focusing on "more important" issues, which themselves vary depending upon the personal political priorities of the person being critical.

This attitude was also the basis for much of the internal problems with the International Socialists and others, who saw broader organizing against the police and the racist policies of the state as being the priority. It is unfortunate that in this way some of the most damaging attacks against the nascent anti-fascist movement have come not from the traditional enemies in the state and on the Right, but from the left itself - many more concerned with maintaining a level of "revolutionary chic" rather than doing the work necessary to forge grassroots political movements.

It is the position of many radicals that anti-fascist work is in itself irrelevant because of the relative lack of power and numbers which the neo-nazi movement commands in Canada at this time. These comrades see state and police racism as the arenas where opposition should be directed, and that "chasing nazis" is an exercise in irrelevancy. However well intended, and correct as far as its analysis of institutionalized racism, this perspective is at its base short-sighted and self-defeating.

It is argued that without the sea of mainstream racism in which to swim, that fascists and fascist movements cannot survive. Therefore, the conclusion becomes that doing work against neo-nazis is beginning at the wrong end of the problem. Again, this is a compelling argument in isolation, particularly because it is theoretically accurate. However, theoretical accuracy does not always lend itself to practical and effective political action. As was stated by Italian anti-fascist Errico Malatesta in early part of the century, "The optimum is the enemy of the good" - the never-ending search for the perfect political action all too often serves as an excuse for doing nothing at all. Indeed, if the anti-racist move-

ment in Toronto cannot strategize and mobilize effectively enough to eliminate a couple of hundred nazis, how can we realistically expect to be able to defeat racist immigration laws and police violence and other institutional monoliths?

Unfortunately, much of this criticism fails to learn from history, even recent history. As was pointed out by a Sri Lankan comrade who spent a year in Germany as a refugee in the late 1980s, the German left chose to ignore the neo-nazi movement at a moment when it was relatively small. At a time when 100,000 people would come out to a disarmament demonstration, little or no attention was being given to the "insignificant" fascist problem. Five years later, we see the terrifying results of allowing that movement to grow unopposed. Events such as Rostock, murderous and violent attacks on refugees and guest workers, and the assassination of anti-fascists are not spontaneous, but are the culmination of years of unhindered organizing. Unfortunately much of the left in Canada has chosen to ignore this lesson.

While we can take all the time we want to formulate the perfect political line and theorize the precise political moment to act, in the meantime what work has been done towards building the movements that will presumably act at that moment? Political process, political experience, and resolve to struggle come only through work, and unfortunately discussion is no substitute for action. How do we expect to inspire people after more than a decade of stunning and crushing defeats for progressive and revolutionary movements around the world?

It has to be understood that broad-based and effective political movements do not appear spontaneously, but are the result of years of struggle. This work, if it is to be realistic and successful, must begin by setting upon manageable goals and taking small victories where they can be won. It is out of the crucible of small victories - which provide experience and inspiration to a movement - that larger victories are possible.

## Race And Resistance

An underlying basis for much of the criticism is the fact that ARA, with notable exceptions, is comprised primarily by white, working class youth. Criticism comes from both radicals of colour, who are sceptical of white radical organizations, and from other white radicals, who essentially believe that white people have no place initiating anti-racist work.

Both criticisms are a concern if we truly hope to forge working links against racism in society. The first criticism is certainly legitimate given the history of much of the white left in North America and Europe with replicating systems of racism and class privilege within their organizing. Indeed these problems were a significant contributor to the downfall of radical white movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

These concerns cannot be ignored, yet can be overcome through consistent and principled work, an openness to constructive criticism from people of colour, and willingness to create political alliances not based on an ill-considered integrationist approach. Ultimately this scepticism, if accepted as being legitimate and worked on in good faith, can provide the basis for a politically stronger and mutually respectful relationship, and therefore the foundations for an effective broad-based movement.

It will be the links with radicals of colour, built upon respect gained from a history of principled political work, which can prove to be the strongest and therefore most reliable in a crisis. It has been the demand of some Trotskyist/Marxist-Leninist parties involved with ARA that the organization go out and recruit people of colour to lead the organization. However, this appeal to recruitment and "building a party" is in itself both self-serving and opportunistic. The way to attract more people of colour to the organization, which is indeed a critical and significant goal, must be accomplished through prin-

ciple political work and an honesty about motivation. People who come into any political organization must be there because they see opportunity, promise, and the possibilities of doing effective work in that organization.

Indeed, merely recruiting people of colour into an organization is a eurocentric, tokenistic approach which ultimately replicates systems of racism in the broader society. Recruitment not only contains an implied hierarchy but also a passivity on the part of those being recruited, which often results in the involvement of people who will be amenable to the party platform, rather than those who want to come in and challenge it for the better. It seems that the latter is always preferable if an organization is sincere about building itself politically and personally. A predominantly white anti-racist group must always be willing to challenge itself on its own racism, and a recruitment based party politic is not an effective means of doing that.

The second criticism is a concern only as much as it is centred in what is essentially a guilt-based politic. For white people to simply defer to people of colour to initiate action around issues of racism is to fundamentally deny both individual and collective historical responsibility for oppression. The effective way to take responsibility for racism is not to sit around and feel guilty and do nothing, but to work against racism in the white community. As former Black Panther Party leader Dhoruba Bin Wahad stated in a lecture in Toronto, "Racism is not a problem Black people have. It's a problem that white people have."

In fact, this is why the make-up of ARA should be seen as an advantage rather than a detriment. While older white leftists may not see the relevancy of white youth, the fascists certainly do and have made the high schools a major political battle ground. The fact that youth of all races are alienated and ignored by society is well accepted, yet until recently it was only the nazis who were capitalizing on this disenchantment to recruit among young white people. Many white radicals have chosen to ignore some of the most important lessons on the role of white people in anti-racist work as articulated by some of the most militant and articulate Black leaders, such as Assata Shakur and Angela Davis.

Such a role was articulated by Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton in their book Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America:

"One of the most disturbing things about almost all white supporters has been that they are reluctant to go into their own communities - which is where racism exists - and work to get rid of it... It is hoped that eventually there will be a coalition of poor Blacks and poor whites... creating a poor-white power block dedicated to the goals of a free, open society - not one based on racism and subordination... The main responsibility of this task falls upon whites... Poor white people are becoming more hostile - not less - toward Black people, partly because they see the nation's attention focused on Black poverty and few, if any, people coming to them... Only whites can mobilize and organize those communities along the lines necessary and possible for effective alliances with Black communities... If the job is to be done, there must be new forms created. Thus, the political modernization process must involve the white community as well as the Black."

The fact that intelligent, articulate and radical young people are working against the recruitment in their schools, and using the nazi presence as an opportunity to get their peers involved and politically educated around broader issues of racism and oppression should be supported rather than criticised. That fact that many bring with them a distrust and disenchantment with "traditional" forms of protest and modes of political organizing is also instructional to those willing to listen and learn. Unfortunately the distrust of Leninist party organizing, disdain for meaningless picketlines in front of faceless

buildings, and desire to incorporate cultural elements of resistance into political work are all challenges to the current leftist hierarchies in the city, and many choose to dismiss ARA based upon the threat which such a perspective poses to their own relative positions of authority. Far too many leftists see young people as cannon fodder, or sheep to be herded in particular directions, rather than as equal partners in political struggle who bring much needed critique, analysis and enthusiasm to the work.

In their argument against doing anti-nazi work, these critics also misunderstand some of the most basic principles of political organizing. It must be recognized that people are not effectively organized out of guilt but out of recognition of their own interest in change. Again to quote Ture and Hamilton, we must move beyond the false "assumption that political coalitions can be sustained on a moral, friendly, sentimental basis; by appeals to conscience." Such an approach does nothing to expose and identify structures of privilege, and can all too easily lead to political dissolution. To Ture and Hamilton, viable political coalitions stem from "the recognition of the parties involved of their respective self-interests...[and]...the mutual belief that each party stands



to benefit in terms of that self-interest from allying with the other or others."

Young white people are at this time facing recruitment by nazi groups, dealing with nazi gangs in their schools and socializing places, and seeing their friends, white and non-white, being attacked by skinheads. Therefore, anti-nazi organizing speaks directly to their experiences and political needs. Obviously, political education and activism cannot stop with concern over one's own needs, but it has to start there. The birth of ARA provides the opportunity to involve a new generation of activists in anti-racist work and in radical political organizing. It provides the political support for white working class youth to organize themselves around issues of racism and oppression, which presents the opportunity of radicalizing a generation of activists. This is the promise of groups such as ARA, and the long term vision which many of its critics on the left are unwilling to see.

## Moving The Movement

The terrain for developing action against the far right is a constantly changing one. The constraints at this point in time are wholly different than they were in the fall of 1992, and the movement must take this into account if it is to continue to grow and be successful. Actions which were possible during the initial phase of ARA activity are more difficult or impossible to organize successfully today. This is primarily the result of preparedness on the part of the fascists. We have to remember that before the Roma demo, the nazis had not experienced a street level response of any magnitude or intensity. This led them to a feeling of security in regards to their activity via a vis general meetings. While expecting some degree of infiltration perhaps, they were not ready for a militant pres-

ence of several hundred to converge on their meeting place.

It was the very fact that they were not expecting nor prepared for such a response that in many ways made a successful demonstration possible. The Heritage Front at that time was less secure with information regarding time and place for their meetings, allowing the date and time of the meeting to be disseminated several days before the meeting and the location to be given to their members as much as twenty-four hours beforehand. This time frame allowed ARA to receive the information in enough time to distribute posters and organize demonstrations.

Subsequent to the Roma demonstration, the Heritage Front has kept meeting details secret until as little as a few hours before the meeting, then notifying their supporters via telephone. With this new security practice, the HF has significantly curtailed the ability of anti-racists to mobilize in sufficient numbers to again confront them at their meetings. This fact highlights two specific needs for ARA's continued viability, 1) differentiation of tactics, and 2) the need for better intelligence.

ARA needs to again be creative in its approach to mobilizing against the fascists. To maintain an approach based solely around mass demonstrations is obviously destructive at a moment when the nazis, through their own security measures, have effectively shut off much of that opportunity. One of the advantages which ARA has always had contributing to the militancy and excitement around their demonstrations is the existence of a visible and identifiable enemy. The best ARA actions to date have come when anti-racists were actually facing down nazis in the streets. However, if the fascists can effectively conceal their gatherings, then the opportunity to go face-to-face with them is gone. The element of surprise, of agency, goes from the anti-racists to the racists, who will be the ones determining when and where they will gather publicly and will therefore be expecting confrontation (as well as police protection).

If the chance of going head-to-head is diminished if not lost, then an over-emphasis on mass mobilization will force ARA back onto the path of demonstrating in front of faceless targets, exactly the thing to which the organization worked to develop alternatives. Necessity, then, demands creativity, and the need to devise strategies for both gathering better intelligence and staging effective actions using smaller numbers.

The most important work to be done, however, lies not within the right but within the left. Unfortunately, it is the left at this moment which poses the major obstacle to the growth of an effective anti-racist movement. The institutionalization of progressive Canadian politics and the visible disdain for the work of ARA and other anti-fascist organizations needs to be addressed openly. The left has to begin to move from its current position of attempting to organize along ideological lines, and instead return to a grassroots approach which speaks directly to people's experiences.

We are unfortunately at a political moment when the only people doing real grassroots organizing, particularly in the white community, are the fascists. They are the ones in the trenches, in the schools and workplaces, and they are capitalizing on institutional white supremacy to organize a growing, well-funded, internationally coordinated, and violent racist movement.

While defeating the neo-nazi movement in Canada is a relatively small task in comparison to defeating institutionalized white supremacy, it is one which is crucial to address at this moment. The work of ARA in particular provides a basis from which many bigger things can emerge. The opportunity to involve young people in political organizing, particularly in a struggle which can show concrete short term gains and can and will inevitably be successful, can provide the inspiration and experience necessary to wage broader and longer term struggles.

# Interview With A Member Of Anti-Racist Action

One June 11, 1993, Anti-Racist Action (ARA) in Toronto entered into a new phase of actions against neo-nazis in the city by taking the struggle against them to the realm of "nazi-doorsteps". After a month of discussions, ARA embarked on a pro-active means of confronting the nazis by exposing them within neighbourhoods where they hide and organize. This new orientation represented a shift by ARA in that they would no longer pursue a strategy based solely on reacting against fascist organizing and violence. ARA decided to broaden its tactics as another step towards stopping the nazi-menace - in a concrete way - in Toronto. This action at the nazi operational centre was organized during a period of covert fascist terror against people of colour - especially the Tamil community - and others. After June 11, various sectors and communities reacted to the ARA action and informally raised concerns about anti-fascist strategies and tactics. Ravi John from ARA addressed some of these issues in an interview with CKLN 88.1, a community-based radio station in Toronto.

On Friday, June 11, 1993, Anti-Racist Action organized a march to the home of neo-nazi propagandist Gary Schipper - the operational centre of Heritage Front "Hateline". Since that demonstration, 4 anti-racists have been arrested. What were the charges under which the 4 were arrested and what are the bail conditions for their release?

The 4 anti-racists have been arrested on charges of mischief to property and disguising with the intention to commit an indictable offense. Other than that, I think one of them was charged with counselling to commit an indictable offense and one woman is charged with assaulting a police officer.

Are these charges quite serious for these ARA members?

I think it is quite serious in the sense that the police want to criminalize the anti-racists, and in the sense that they want to put them into the same category as neo-nazis, and show them as a somewhat criminal element in our society; which is not true.

I understand the bail conditions are pretty tough also...

The bail conditions include non-association with other ARA members and they are banned from any demos in the entire province of Ontario - no matter if they are anti-racist or not, and there is a curfew stuck on them - they have to be at home at 9 o'clock in the evening.

Let's go back to the June 11 demo. What is the official position of ARA on the events at Schipper's house.

The event, as such, was not isolated; we can't isolate the event or the nature of the demo. What happened on June 11 was that ARA decided that we should take the anti-racist struggle, or the fight against neo-nazis, to their own territory, to their own operational centres. The home of Gary Schipper was targeted because anti-racists had been watching that place for some time and observing what kind of activities were going on there. The house was an operational centre, it was not just a home.

So, 300 people gathered in a community centre in Toronto, and we were very open about the fact that we were going to keep the destination of the demonstration a secret. Eventually, when we got closer to this operational centre, we distributed flyers and stickers, and we started to put up stickers around the neighbourhood, and we gave Schipper's photograph to the demonstrators, and so they knew that we were going to his place. The purpose was to expose that location to the community there - here nazis are carrying out their hate propaganda and also this is where they coordinate their activities. So, ARA was able to show the community that nazis can't get away with these things - people are prepared to come to their doorstep and express their anger. This is quite opposite to what nazis have been doing; terrorizing people in a discreet manner.

During the demo, some anti-racists broke away from the crowd and they did some damage to the property. You have to understand that it was a very focused action - no other homes were damaged. You have to understand the context of what happened and the context of the times. There had been attacks against anti-racists in Ottawa, there had been two attacks against the Tamil community here - one person was killed and one is now partially paralysed. The had also been an attack in Kitchener against a Jewish shop owner. There had been an attack on Black community activists, and there was an arson attack on a young women's hostel.

So, I think, in this context, some youth decided to express their legitimate anger. ARA's position is, it is not for us to condemn or condone that. We have to understand why this happened, and so the burden does not lie



with ARA, rather it lies with the neo-nazis; their activities have led to this type of situation. It is not our task to police our people. If some youth decide to do that sort of thing, our task is to protect them, because we understand their legitimate anger. I think ARA prevented a division among the ranks of anti-fascists and anti-racists.

The June 11 demonstration has sparked a huge media attack on ARA. Apart from the mainstream media, there have been some legitimate concerns raised by the community, one of which is that at that particular demonstration people went to it thinking that it was going to be peaceful. But on arriving there, things turned out differently. These people might be alienated from further ARA actions. How do you deal with that concern?

I think I have to make just one small clarification. We assembled at the community centre - that was peaceful. We had a small outside rally there - that was peaceful. We took streetcars to the operational centre - that was peaceful. Then we gathered in a small park - that was peaceful. We marched through the neighbourhood to Schipper's house and that was peaceful. But ARA never tries to hide the fact that when it comes to confronting nazis there might be - there might be - some sort of action that does not fall into this category of so-called 'peaceful

demonstrations'. People are aware of that, and that is the tradition of ARA, and ARA was actually born with that tradition last year when the neo-nazis tried to march to the courthouse, but were chased away by anti-racists.

I can understand these concerns because people from various backgrounds and various levels of political understanding, who still want to oppose neo-nazis, they see these demonstrations as the ideal opportunity to express their anger, even in a symbolic way. At the same time, you have to understand that we don't want to divide the movement; we don't want to see that a certain crowd just adheres to peaceful means and others adhere just to militancy. Both forms of action are complimentary to each other.

June 11 was just one demo. It is not the only strategic way of fighting nazis for ARA. For ARA it is a broadening of our tactics, but it is not the one strategic way of dealing with things.

We have to consider that ARA is not the only organization in this city which fights the nazis and takes the initiative in fighting racism. However as an organization, ARA can't satisfy everyone. ARA has chosen the strategy of direct action against neo-nazis whenever possible. If others want to embark on different tactics, then we respect them and see them as valuable contributions to the overall struggle.

But the problem is, you know that an organization like ARA is a perfect target for agents provocateur, right? And if there isn't internal discipline within the movement, then it's an ideal opportunity for somebody from the outside to come and disrupt things, and it would reflect on ARA as an organization. I'm not saying that's what happened at Schipper's house, but in the future that could happen. Are there ways that you can prevent that from happening, as an organization?

At every demonstration we should have an assessment of the nature of the demonstration and what is the purpose of the demonstration. If the action of an individual or a group of people falls within the scope of ARA's strategic aims, we don't have sufficient reason to suspect anybody. Furthermore, the charge of agent provocateurs has traditionally been used against militant political activists. Yes, we are conscious about agent provocateurs; but the organization that plans and carries out political actions has a better chance to identify agents rather than outside political observers.

At ARA events, people of colour are often on the front-line and knowing the historical background of how the police look at people of colour, and how they target them, the concern is that in an organization in which the majority are white, people of colour are being put in the front-lines during ARA actions.

I think we have to look at all the past actions of ARA, because I think this concern really came to the forefront after June 11. These concerns are legitimate and we can understand these concerns, and the problem is, o.k., it is a fact that the majority of ARA members are white, so in that sense we can expect that the most militant members are going to be white, which may or may not be true; it is beside the point. In any actions which ARA has planned or has taken, we do not tell what position to take. We try to create a relatively safe space in demos, then participants decide where to position themselves.

ARA does not go and try to exclude people, so this might be one demonstration where the majority of the people who took a front-line stance were people of colour. But I don't think this is true for all ARA demonstrations; because if anybody wants to take to the front-line and be strong and very militant, and can take the

pressure not just from the neo-nazis but also from the police, they are welcomed. I think, in this sense, that most people of colour, because of their day-to-day repression and the discrimination they face, I think that they have that strength because that is their reality, and so if they decide they want to be in the front-line, I think we should allow that to happen. But the problem is, yes you are right, that they are the people who are going to be targeted. So, people who don't want to be in the front-lines, their main responsibility is to protect these people.

And that goes beyond the actual organization itself, to the community itself, let's say, people of colour who are not part of ARA. The ARA actions are creating an atmosphere where there is retaliation against communities of colour. Somebody walking down the street might be attacked by these neo-nazis just because of the colour of their skin. That brings us to the question of accountability to those communities of colour who are being affected by ARA actions, but whose opinion may not be listened to. How do you address that concern?

That is a legitimate concern and it is not a new one; it has been here in other social struggles also. I think, first of all, the anti-racist movement in the city is not responsible for actions of the neo-nazis. The neo-nazis are the people who are responsible for their own actions - that's why we want them to be held accountable.

I am a refugee, and I was living with other refugees in a rooming house in Pickering (a city outside of Toronto - ed.) in 1989, and I was attacked by a skinhead, and that was just one year before the Heritage Front started - that is how I got a keen interest in these issues.

And now it is reported that there are over 500 hate crimes in Toronto, and most of the attacks are not even reported. So, anti-fascist actions might create a situation that when the nazis are cornered and when they get more and more defensive day-by-day, out of desperation they might take out their anger on a person of colour. But, at the same time, the violence of the nazis is not initiated by actions against them, and they are not motivated to go out and attack people of colour because there is an anti-racist presence in the streets. Rather, that is their ideology, that is what they spend their time preparing for. When they go out and attack a person of colour, it's a matter of timing.

That is exactly what happened in Germany in 1988, when I was a refugee there. The neo-nazis were very marginal, mostly marginalized youth. The mainstream and the radical political community completely ignored them. The nazis organized very well and they were prepared when the Berlin Wall fell, and all the other social concerns unfolded, and they were prepared to go on the attack against people of colour. Despite the anti-racist presence there in Germany, the brunt of the attacks are against people of colour. But that does not mean that people of colour should not take part in defensive actions against nazis. Actually, the strongest anti-racist youth are Turkish youth because they are the people who are targeted. They are much more militant than all the radical political activists. Day-to-day they fight the nazis in the street because that is a matter of survival for them.

So, these things happen, we have to be aware of that, but at the same time we should not strategize the anti-racist struggle based on just this concern. We have to think of going beyond that and how to stop these people, because I don't want to get involved in this struggle for the next 20 or 30 years just fighting neo-nazis. I don't want to see society polarized. I want to see these people stopped in a concrete way, at least in their organizing capability. They should feel cornered and besieged and threatened for being neo-nazis. I don't want to feel threatened for being a person of colour.

Is there a dialogue planned with the community? I think that part of the problem is that there is lack of

communication and that concerns are raised and there is no dialogue between ARA and certain communities that have been organizing against racism in a more traditional sense.

Yes, to an extent. I don't want to pretend that it is going smoothly. ARA has one crew of members that are devoted to the task of reaching out to other communities, but it has not happened through very constructive dialogue of what is the strategy for neo-nazis. I think it should come up within the struggle. We can't just come up with a blueprint and go to the communities and say 'this is the blueprint for fighting nazis - what do you think, what are your concerns?' I think it will come up within the struggle. We saw that happening particularly after June 11. Before June 11, yes, we tried, through the outreach crew, to reach these communities and ask for their support, and people had concerns for some time, but after June 11, yes, people had a lot of concerns, and they raised these concerns. And we were able to get back to them with a very clear statement of what happened, and ask for their continued support.

At the same time, very positive things have happened. After the attacks against the Tamil community, a wide coalition was initiated by anti-racists and activists from the left political community. This was very positive and it gives us ample opportunity to deal with these concerns in a very direct way. At the same time, we did not hear any reservations, in a concrete way, from any one of the communities.

I think that dialogue should happen because we don't want to do something for them. And after all if we don't address their concerns it doesn't help our struggle in the long term. So I think that communication should be more comprehensive and it should be an ongoing thing, and I think that because of the anti-racist coalition in this city and because people are now aware of ARA better than before, there is some attention on ARA, and it can help us when we go to them and discuss these concerns.

One thing ARA has done effectively is to stop neo-nazi recruitment in high-schools. One problem with an organization that depends on direct action - and ARA is not the only one - is that we have the experience of other organizations especially directed towards youth who might join ARA as a first political act in their lives, and they really have lots of energy but little politicization. How much of that is a problem, and how are you trying to deal with it?

ARA has been somewhat successful in organizing high-school students who are being deliberately targeted by the Heritage Front. And most of these youths are white and, yes, it might be their first political involvement, and their first political engagement and political action might be being involved in ARA. Anti-Racist Action is something they can relate to, because this is a question within their own community, within their own society, within their own social level. It is something they can easily relate to: neo-nazis and fascists are targeting us and we are

subject to their recruitment.

ARA has been able to attract these youth through various means, not just street-level political action, but through creating an anti-racist culture, through concerts and parties and making some social space for them. So, these people are attracted to ARA, and the way politicization happens is that it is not just what you can read in a textbook, I think people will be solidified and enlightened when they broaden their outlook from just focusing on anti-fascist work to other issues like police violence and institutionalized racism; by being involved in day-to-day actions. It might be going to a Rock Against Racism

continued on page 27...

**On 9/31/24, ARA organized a demonstration which had a two-fold purpose: one, to prevent a possible march by HF in support of 3 of its members who were on trial, and two, to march to the headquarters of a major figure in the international neo-Nazi movement - Ernest Zundel (see poster below). There was a massive mobilization by the police to protect Zundel's headquarters which included the Public Order Unit, Emergency Task Force and numerous undercover cops. After Zundel's building was pelted by eggs and paintbombs, police attacked the demonstration and arrested 8 people and injured several others. ARA is organizing a defense campaign in support of those arrested. As well, 4 ARA members who were arrested after the June 11 demo still face charges and need your support. To contribute to the defense fund send money to: ARA, P.O. Box 664, Stn. C, Toronto, Ont. M6J 3S1. Infoline: (416) 631 8835**

## THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY...

**RECHT! ICE!**

**NOT!**

**STOP ZUNDEL**

Ernest Zundel, guru of the neo-Nazi movement

For his distribution of materials denying the Holocaust, Ernest Zundel was charged in 1983 under Canada's hate laws. After a lengthy show trial and a series of appeals, the Supreme Court dismissed charges against him on Aug. 27 '92. From his bunker at 286 Carlton, Zundel runs one of the largest neo-Nazi propaganda operations in the world including publishing, printing, radio and video. Every year Zundel funnels hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash and propaganda to the neo-Nazi movement in Europe and Canada.

**Prevent a Nazi March!**

Toronto will no longer tolerate racism and fascism. We will be at the courts to prevent a Nazi march and then we will march to Zundel's production and distribution headquarters.

**WEDNESDAY NOV. 24, 9AM SHARP RALLY AT CITY HALL**

**ANTI-RACIST ACTION**

P.O. BOX 664 STN C, TORONTO ONT. M6J 3S1 • TEL: 631-8835

On November 24, four main organizers for the neo-Nazi Heritage Front will be in court. On this day the first hate crimes trial in Toronto since Zundel's begins. Ellise Hategan a.k.a. Desschner has been charged for distributing a leaflet hateful to Black people. That same day Gary Schipper, Ken Barker and Wolfgang Droege are in court on contempt charges for their refusal to cease broadcasting hate on the Heritage Front telephone hotline. While the courts would have us believe that they are making efforts against hate propagandists in this city, we know that the biggest hatermonger of all is operating with impunity only a few blocks away. To date, the HF have used court dates such as these as an opportunity to have a fascist march in our streets...

# Each Stage Has A Specific Form Of Struggle

## Interview With Tupamaro Eleuterio Huidobro

Since 1985, the Uruguayan urban-guerrilla group, the Tupamaros, has been working in a legal form. The following is an interview, translated from the Dutch left-radical paper *Konfrontatie* No. 3, with Eleuterio F. Huidobro, one of the founders of the Tupamaros. In the interview he discusses the history of the Tupamaros, their current work with the Uruguayan people, and the future of the left in Latin America in the 90's.

Eleuterio Fernandez Huidobro, 49, was born the son of a Spanish immigrant to Montevideo. In 1958 he became politically active. He took part in the resistance to the new laws governing the universities and was arrested for the first time in 1962. In the following years he was active with the sugar planters' union (UTAA) which was a part of the labour movement's left-wing.

In 1965, along with Raul Sendic and others, he helped set up the National Liberation Movement (MLN)/Tupamaros. The very next year he was forced to go underground. He took part in urban-guerrilla actions until he was captured in October of 1969. In September of 1971, he gained his freedom in a spectacular escape from prison, but just a year later he once again fell into the hands of the army when a Tupamaro safe-house was stormed. Eleuterio was seriously wounded in this attack.

Weeks before the military coup of June, 1973, he and other leaders of the Tupamaros were taken as "state-hostages" to far-off military barracks where they were detained for 11 1/2 years. The prisoners were often tortured and kept in isolation for years on end.

When the protests against the military dictatorship heightened, the "state-hostages" were regrouped in April of 1984 and transported to the 'La libertad' prison. After the installation of a civilian government in March of 1985, they were finally released. On the day of his release, Huidobro declared, in the name of the historic leadership of the Tupamaros, the new form of the organization: a legal political movement.

Presently Huidobro edits the periodical *Mate Amargo* and is part of the collective leadership of the Tupamaros.

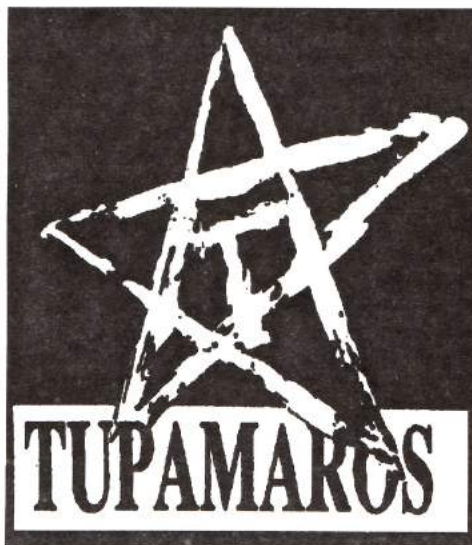
**You began your career in political work in a legal political movement. What made you decide to abandon legal means and start a movement which carried out armed struggle?**

We never entirely abandoned legitimacy, because we never limited ourselves to purely military actions. We carried out legal mass-actions as well as armed actions. This was typical of the Tupamaros, and that's why we differed from other guerrilla organizations in Latin America.

**OK, but unlike other leftist organizations in Uruguay, the Tupamaros began their struggle at a military level.**

Actually, our initial goal was not to carry out armed struggle, but to prepare for it. On the basis of our theoretical analysis, it was our opinion that Uruguay was on the brink of a deep social and institutional crisis. We thought this situation would explode violently. We wanted to prepare for this, so that we could play a role in this anticipated situation. And in our preparatory stage, some unfortunate things happened. There were confrontations, and several companeros had to go underground. But we, the leadership, knew that these unfortunate occurrences would be counter-productive. The necessary conditions for armed struggle were not yet present.

**Were you conscious of the fact that during the 60's the**



conditions were not right for armed struggle?

Yes, of course. Our task was to prepare, nothing more. Starting in 1967, events happened very fast; the Uruguayan president died suddenly, and he was succeeded by someone from the far-right who took everything into his own hands. A sharp economic and social crisis broke out. The class struggle took on a new intensity. And a hard wave of repression followed. The national parliament and high courts were suspended, and the state of emergency became permanent. Given that situation, the armed struggle was the only correct manner in which to react. With it, we supported the legal mass-movement, because we only used forms of military struggle which the people could understand.

**So your concept of armed struggle was a defensive one? Defensive, in that it was a way of responding to the illegal aggression and brutality of the state apparatus?**

We reacted to what the state did with our actions. The first political prisoners in my country were those rounded up as the state of emergency was imposed, were not Tupamaros, they were union leaders, students, and politicians. The same goes for the first fatalities. The movement was, to a large degree, headed by students; the workers, the politicians, and even us, followed. We supported the electoral coalition of the leftist parties, while carrying out armed struggle at the same time.

**How did the rest of the left, for example, the Communist Party [of Uruguay - ed.], react to the use of military violence? Because this was a form of struggle which they were not using.**

The Communist Party (CP) dismissed our use of armed struggle, although they were preparing for it as well.

**Did they actually make preparations, or was it all just talk?**

They did prepare, but they never made use of their training. That fact is a big issue within the CP in Uruguay at the moment. The CP never used weapons, and they had a critical, although not antagonistic view of the armed struggle of the MLN/Tupamaros and other armed groups.

And it's important to make a distinction between the view of the CP leaders and the rank-and-file, because many party members were in solidarity with our actions.

**On the basis of what did the MLN attempt to bind together the use of a variety of tactics (base-movement, parliament, elections, and guerrilla-actions)?**

We were of the opinion that all forms of struggle were necessary, and depending on the specific situation, one form might become temporarily more important than another, but that no form should be totally abandoned. We tried to analyze the forms of struggle to use in each political phase. The problem was, the Tupamaros were known internationally for their guerrilla-actions. Because what foreign correspondent would ever come to Uruguay to write about the unions or the student struggle? Or to do a report on the Tupamaros electoral strategy?

**You just said that the Tupamaros weighed the significance of certain forms of struggle against the political situation. But was there one form of struggle which was, in principle, more important, or which played a more strategic role? For example, the armed struggle, or the mass-movement?**

Around 1969-70, it's difficult to say exactly when, we slid towards militarism. We've determined this in our self-criticism. The MLN wasn't, from its beginning, a military organization. Only later did we learn through experience that it's strategically important to gain the support of the people. If a guerrilla movement tries to operate without the support of the people, they're simply a problem for the police and intelligence services, but they're certainly not a political problem. The conflict gets played out among a limited number of well-trained apparatuses.

**How did the militarism of the Tupamaros manifest itself in practice?**

Through the fact that despite constant analysis, people notwithstanding came to the conclusion that military actions were necessary. Some of these actions were pointless, even counter-productive. At certain times when the mass-movement was really strong, we put too little time into political work and didn't work in the base-movement enough. The military defeat of 1972 showed that the urban-guerrilla, even if it reaches its goal, can still hit its limits.

**How do you mean?**

If the urban-guerrilla has the support of broad levels of the population, but continues to agitate merely as urban-guerrilla, that has the result of turning the masses defencelessly over to the death-squads and to fascism. This was even the case when the urban-guerrilla was taking actions against the security apparatus, a struggle in which the masses weren't involved. Even militarily, this was a mistake because when armed struggle is necessary and the guerrilla has achieved its goal of winning the support of the people, then the guerrilla needs to change the character of its actions. Then the guerrilla needs to transform itself into an army which fights a war and liberates territory and so forth.

That's what happened in Nicaragua and El Salvador. They learned from our defeats.

**You could say the situation in Uruguay was like a cat-and-mouse game, wherein the public stood passively by and applauded when the mouse was successful?**

Yes, exactly. And as an extra point, the enemy decided to wage an all-out war on the people's movement. Since it was possible to get at the guerrilla by attacking the base-movement, since they were interconnected, the enemy just attacked the people full-force.

**Did the Tupamaros ever consider moving their struggle into rural areas, to set up strategic points there, and to thereby support the struggle in the cities?**

We did consider doing rural guerrilla actions, but never with an eye to building up strategic points, because it is impossible in our country. That's possible in a place like El Salvador, but not in Uruguay. Our country is so big and flat, like a soccer stadium full of cows. There's no way to build up strategic points.

**So, considering the particular circumstances in Uruguay, you could not fall back on the concept of a prolonged people's war or uprising, political-military concepts which are so important in Central America?**

I'm reluctant to fall back on definite schemes and to answer with stereotypes. The ideas which you're questioning carry with them certain dangers. Political-military concepts aren't universally applicable, and that's one thing that always typified the Tupamaros, being an organization which rejected set schemes. The Tupamaros developed the urban-guerrilla at a time when the rural-guerrilla was the norm. We never stopped working among the people and developing an election strategy, while at the same time carrying out guerrilla struggle. At the time these concepts seemed self-exclusive. But we used our own heads and developed our own strategy and tactics based on our study of our own concrete reality. Above all, it was clear that what happened in Argentina and Brazil was of great significance to us.

**The army and the death-squads began to bloodily suppress the masses then. Did military advisors from the U.S. play a role in this? And if yes, then how?**

They played an important role. The Uruguayan army was provided with weapons and training by the U.S. The mentality of the officers was heavily influenced by the training they had received in Panama. The American advisors made sure that they saw everything in terms of the Cold War, wherein communism was the devil that had to be destroyed. But also Franquist and national-socialist ideals were prevalent among the military.

**So there were other instructors for the extremely horrible, scientific forms of repression?**

Yes, but they were even more to the right of the Americans. During the Second World War a club of officers developed in the Uruguayan army which was openly pro-Nazi and which was heavily influenced by the Falangists, Hitler, and Mussolini. Sure, they were silenced, but they weren't forced out of the army. Many Obrists and generals in 1970-72 were part of this club. After the military dictatorship had been in place for a few years, the U.S. halted military aid to these figures, who even regarded President Carter as a leading communist.

**What role did the death-squads and systematic torture play in destroying the people's movement?**

The death-squads and para-military organizations came into being all over Latin America. They mostly consisted of soldiers and police officers, who, when not in uniform, committed truly heinous deeds. There was

also widespread torture once the class conflict had reached a certain point. It was called 'Guatemalization', because Guatemala was the first country to experience such repression.

**What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Tupamaros at that time period?**

The strengths: we developed a form of struggle which booked many successes. We were not sectarian, and we helped build up a people's movement. We made a definite contribution to bringing about a revolutionary consciousness which still exists among the Uruguayan people. The weaknesses: we didn't realize that we had reached our goal, and we didn't see the responsibility we had to develop new methods of struggle, including in the military sphere, so as to be in a position where we could be totally handed over to the enemy.

## The Military Putsch And The Defeat Of The Tupamaros

**In June of 1973, the army carried out a putsch. The people's movement could not hinder the military dictatorship, even though a general strike lasted for over two weeks. What remained of the Tupamaros and the people's movement after the first wave of repression?**

At that moment, the structures of the MLN which were responsible for the people's movement were still intact. In June, the coup was successfully ended. After the parliament was sent home, the people's movement launched a really powerful general strike. The people kept fighting, but they were defenceless, because their military organs, the Tupamaros, had been wiped out. Certainly other structures were still intact, like those of the CP, but these were never used. Presently, the fact is still being discussed: why weren't they used.

**What did the military do after it had defeated the resistance?**

They wrecked everything that the unions and the students had built up, they outlawed political parties and university occupations. Within a few months, Uruguay, which once had been dubbed the Switzerland of Latin America, had become totally warped. The prisons were overflowing, and thousands of people were being tortured, killed, made to disappear, exiled - it was an unmeasurable reign of terror.

**Did the army basically function as the armed wing of the Uruguayan bourgeoisie, or as the servant of U.S. imperialism?**

In my country, it has been difficult to differentiate between the interests of imperialism and the bourgeoisie. The Uruguayan population is a lumpen-bourgeoisie. They lack a national identity. So they are really more of a buffer-figure than a real servant of imperialism. Of course there are groups whose interests are in the country

and have no foreign contacts. But they aren't very strong, they don't have a developed perspective, and consequently, they are kept down. What the army did was essentially synthesize the two elements; it acted as the armed wing of the oligarchy and at the same time it served North American interests. At a historic moment, the army began to act too single-handedly, and then things got out of hand. That meant the end of the political rule of the army.

**Did the army transform itself into an economic power, like the army did in Guatemala?**

They were planning to. But due to the self-interest of a few officers, they never reached that goal.

**Did the officers and generals parade themselves as individuals, or was the army more an institution - for example, were companies set up that were actually just the army?**

The soldiers did things with individual titles. And they did try to get control of the state industries. Directorships were the most lucrative posts. But unfortunately for them, Uruguay is a small country. So, there wasn't much to pass around, but there was no shortage of ambitious soldiers. And then came corruption, and that led to splits within the army itself.

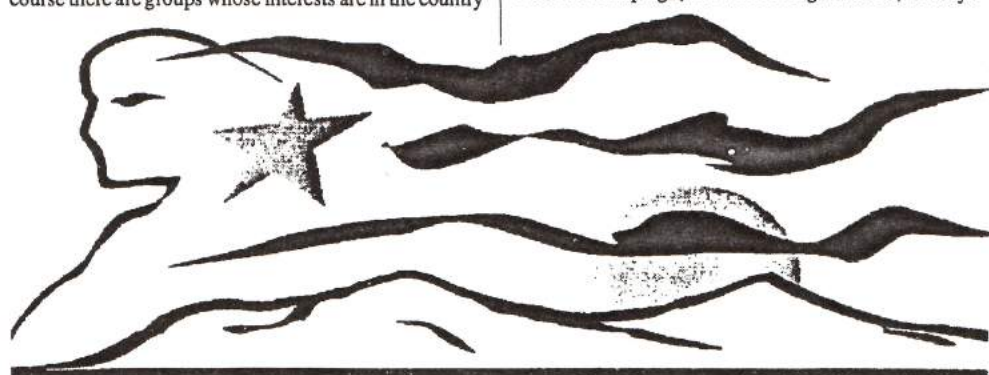
**In the latter half of the 70's, were there still organizational structures of the people's movement, and the Tupamaros, intact?**

For practically that whole time, organizational work was done within all segments of the left, although they were harshly attacked. Even the Communist Party, despite the line they had taken, was hurt, and many party members had bad times in 1975/76. That was a black period, a heavy time. Work was limited to that which was most urgent. In that period, work from those in exile was important. Only in 1980 did the mass-movement begin to bloom again.

**What led to that? Around what demands did a new base-movement arise?**

To put it simply, the army messed up: they thought they had been completely successful by crushing the mass-movement both through force and through their systematic propaganda. They rewrote textbooks, they banned gatherings of more than four people on the street, and you had to get permission from the police to celebrate a birthday. The left had either been driven out of the country or thrown into jail, and so on.

Then they organized a referendum to change the constitution in order to legalize their hold on power and to give the impression that there was not a dictatorship in place. All propaganda was outlawed, and lots of people were brought in to be interrogated. They were completely convinced that they would win. But without propaganda, without a campaign, and without organization, the major-



ity voted "no". That was a heavy defeat for the dictatorship. They lost their few remaining international allies, and domestically they were headed for a fall.

## Did the military make other mistakes?

They tried to set up 'yellow' unions, ones which were to be friendly to employers. The union leaders, who represented a new generation, and who had little experience, were nonetheless intelligent. They used what little room they had to build up class-conscious organizations. And in 1983, when demonstrations on May 1 were permitted, there was a huge outpouring of people. That gave the dictatorship the final push.

## Did the military achieve its goal of individualizing people and driving them apart?

No, they did not succeed. Quite the contrary. An example: before I entered prison, a stranger would greet you with formal language on the street. But when I was released in 1985, everything was casual. People had grown closer to one another.

## Is this result different than with the Chilean dictatorship, which did, to a degree, succeed in this?

Yes, the Pinochet dictatorship did succeed in implementing an economic model which is of interest to neo-liberals. In Uruguay, the military model caused an economic disaster. That was, and I forgot to mention this earlier, a major cause of the collapse of the dictatorship.

## The military junta in Uruguay did not succeed in building up new production sectors?

On the contrary, they destroyed the production sectors and led Uruguay towards an economic catastrophe. All they did was make the country a paradise for financial transactions. They sold all the banks to big international banks. And this led to sharp internal contradictions between the junta and the bourgeoisie.

## The Contemporary Politics Of The Tupamaros

I want to come to some more actual questions. I'm especially interested in what role the Tupamaros play within the mass-movement. Let's begin with the campaign against the amnesty for those accused of human rights violations. What did the government want?

The government, which was under heavy pressure from the military, came up with a plan to allow the military to remain intact and unpunished. When the dictatorship collapsed, there was a wave of evidence and witnesses implicating the military in any number of horrid crimes. After a parliamentary inquiry, evidence was taken to court and many soldiers were being threatened with convictions. When the first officer was due to appear before the court, the army showed its contempt for the law and stated that no officers would stand trial. This was essentially a technical coup, and an "institutional crisis" developed.

## And then?

The leading civilian politicians and the military came to a secret agreement of which the left knew nothing. On December 22, 1986, the right-wing parties voted in a law which put aside all punishments. Many civilian politicians who had led the opposition to the dictatorship suddenly defended this law, much to everyone's surprise. The Uruguayan oligarchy and the imperialists hereby tried to retain an armed grip on power. Because the investigations into human rights

abuses did not merely reveal misconduct on the part of a few officers, but revealed that it was in fact a systematic policy of the entire army itself. And standing trial would have been a heavy blow to the army as an institution. The next day the Mothers of the Disappeared demanded that a referendum be held to repeal this law.

## Who organized the campaign for the referendum?

A broad alliance was created, the "National Campaign for a Referendum", which included all of the left, the human rights organizations, the churches, and even a number of civic organizations. We succeeded in getting the signatures of 634,702 of Uruguay's 3 million inhabitants.

## And what role did the MLN/Tupamaros play in this movement?

We were the first organization to support the Mothers' call. We were also in the movement. For a year and a half there was a massive mobilization. When went from house to house, explained the issue, and gathered signatures. The military, in refusing to appear in court, was attempting to block the inquiry into human rights abuses. But just the opposite happened. For two years, a gigantic tribunal was held, and its central theme was human rights abuses in Uruguay.

## What importance did this have for the relationship between Montevideo, which had long been the centre of political activity, and the rest of the country?

The left, for the first time ever, became really active in the country's interior, and people heard for the first time ever about the military's crimes. The people were confronted with a reality which was new to them. So the campaign really politicized and organized people.

## The referendum eventually lost. What was the result: frustration at the defeat, or a strengthened left?

Many people voted for the left for the first time ever, something which gave us strength. The activists were, of course, really upset at the defeat, but they knew they had accomplished a lot and they were willing to go on. Uruguay is the only country in Latin America where the question of whether or not to punish the military was not reduced to an accord between a handful of politicians and the military, or the decision of a court. Here, the question was debated for two years by a tribunal run by the people. This led to the growth of the left.

## About the election: the left succeeded, thanks to the alliance "Frente Amplio" (Broad Front), in breaking into the traditional two-party system (Colorados; Partido Nacional) in 1989, and the left even gained a majority in Montevideo. How did the Tupamaros fit into this election campaign?

We are a part of the Frente Amplio. Other groups are in this alliance as well, and we and some others are part of the Movement for the Participation of the People (MPP). That is a mass-movement, one which is broader than the MLN, and it does more than just elections. It works also with youth, women, and cultural organizations, and it does a variety of activities. As a part of the Frente Amplio, we also take part in elections.

## Did the Tupamaros field candidates as well?

No, the MLN does not field candidates. The known leaders of the MLN were not candidates, but we did help with the Frente campaign and we heavily supported MPP candidates.

## But why didn't you all, as an organization, field candidates?

That was the subject of intense discussions within the Frente Amplio, the MPP, and the MLN. Within the MLN, we had debated the problem of elections for a long time already. To further the unity of the left, and to support the growth of the MPP tendency, the MLN held back in favour of more independent candidates. The other reason is that the Tupamaros, in the past and in the future, see their strength in other realms than elections. We think the people know us and expect differently of us. They don't expect us to be candidates in elections. That was a difficult discussion, but it was eventually decided with a majority within both the MLN and the MPP.

## I sense in your statements a certain reservation from other leftist tendencies concerning the possibility of MLN candidates. Why is this?

There are different reasons for this. They are afraid that MLN candidates will get more votes than their own, since we have a lot of support among the population. But even within the left, there are lots of people, who are not part of the MLN, who felt we should take part, since we might be able to attract votes for the Frente Amplio. Others, from the right, felt that by not taking part, we've be slighting the democratic system and planning to renew the armed struggle.

## How do you rate the possibilities of the Frente Amplio being able to implement its politics, considering it has a majority in Montevideo, and a mayor there? Because it is the most important city, although the central government controls the money, and the country's economic situation is bad...

We won the election in Uruguay's most important electoral district and inherited a paradox: we have a right-wing central government, but the most important city has a left-wing mayor. So that will naturally cause problems, as you imply. But in addition to this, there are other problems as well. The bureaucratic apparatus of this super-centralized city has been built up and run by the right-wing for ages. This inheritance is a pure catastrophe.

But until now we've struggled against these problems and haven't been able to change much, because we haven't been able to push through all our plans. An important point for us is the democratization of the city, so that the residents of the various neighbourhoods can solve problems in their own neighbourhood councils.

## ...so you're planning to really democratize the city?

We are striving for direct neighbourhood control of planning, financing, and control. Because Montevideo's bureaucracy is terrible. It's in no position to solve the problems of the outlying areas from out of the centre. That's why we want to create 18 smaller local governments, so that the residents themselves can control things, even if they are from the traditional parties, the Colorados and the Blancos. The right-wing doesn't care if local government functions well, or if a new botanical garden is built, or if the street-lights work. But our plan of putting control directly in the hands of residents really annoys the right-wing.

## Do you all have more to offer than democratic reforms and clean, technical-administrative improvements?

Yes, something very important, especially for a government like that in Montevideo: an end to corruption and embezzlement.

## Are you all also doing something to improve the eco-

**conomic situation of the majority of the population? Things like affordable public transportation and housing?**

We kept our election promises and lowered the prices for public transportation. We can tackle some things you've suggested, but not all. We just don't have the money, it's as simple as that. So we're trying to stimulate self-help, like our cholera-prevention program. And although there's no money to build housing, we do make building materials affordable for community reconstruction. And the poor can purchase basic foodstuffs at reduced prices in neighbourhood stores.

**In Lima, the United Left (UI) had these same problems, as did the Workers' Party (PT), which is in power in Brazil's major cities. In Peru, getting a number of mayoral posts actually weakened the parliamentary left, since they had such big problems to deal with. Do see this as a danger for the Frente Amplio?**

We've tried as much as possible to learn from our mistakes and not to repeat our errors. And above all, the Uruguayan people are very politicized, and they are conscious of the fact that, even with a left-wing city council in Montevideo, they have not achieved a paradise on Earth. But the people do look to see that you're doing everything possible, and that you're not getting corrupt.

**What, in your opinion, is the strategic importance of the parliamentary struggle and the activities of the people's movement?**

Elections are important fields of struggle, just like union and student work. But we don't consider it the most important arena, like other left groups do. Just like before, we realize that a higher priority may lie elsewhere.

Right now, it looks like the left could win the national elections in 1994. This would strengthen the left; but this won't happen solely because of the parliament and the election. Social mobilizations, like the campaign for human rights and workers' struggles, must also be factored in. Our strength sometimes manifests itself in an election, another time in a massive strike.

**So the parliamentary work, like the base-movement work, are at different levels, an attempt for the left to tie together different strengths?**

Exactly. Our strategic goal is to unite different forces. Right now, the situation is paradoxical, because although we're winning elections, we're losing labour struggles. Almost all strikes fail and disappoint the workers. In the student movement, as well, things aren't going as well as they once did. At the same time, a lot is going on in poor neighbourhoods. What we win on one front, we lose on another. So our bundle of strengths is a paradox. For us, as for all of the left, the decline in the number of activists ("militants") is our biggest worry.

**How do you account for this decline?**

Many people are withdrawing from active struggle. This is happening all over Latin America, and, like I said, the same is true in Europe. In Uruguay, one can point to several causes: to survive here you literally have to work two jobs at least. The compañeros come home exhausted and they don't have as much time as they once did for political activities. The end of socialism in Eastern Europe is another reason. That disoriented a lot of people, especially within the Communist Party, and has caused

them to rethink a lot of things.

**Are these symptoms also noticeable within the MLN?**

Yes. The Uruguayan CP was hurt the most, but so was the Socialist Party, the MLN, and other groups.

**What other factors led to a decline in the number of activists?**

We think the left made a lot of mistakes, mistakes which the Frente Amplio leadership made under the influence of social-democratic and reformist tendencies, and this led to a demobilization. Deals were made with the government which many activists did not agree with. And a lot of strike actions went wrong. So a lot of factors led to this disappointment. But we consider this a temporary phenomenon.

**And what about the youth? Are they active, or do they have other problems?**

The youth played an important, albeit not decisive role in the fall of the dictatorship. Their involvement began during the dictatorship, so they missed out on the experiences of the older leftist cadres who were either in prison or exile, and yet they had to lead the struggle against the dictatorship. They believed the fall of the dictatorship would bring with it an end to the economic problems as well. But they soon realized they were mistaken. This was a great disappointment for them. Also, the left never succeeded in getting a big following among the youth.



**Could it be that the older militants returned from exile, or, in your case, were released from prison, and had an unbelievable wealth of experience and theoretical knowledge...**

We came out of exile and out of prison with our old truths, with our paternalism, and with a comprehensive knowledge. We treated our younger comrades like little children who needed to learn from us. We were terribly arrogant, and we just repeated our old themes and disregarded the new insights of the youth, although they were much more in tune with the current reality than we were. This caused lots of conflicts at the universities, in the unions, and so on.

**Do you think the idea of the "true" activist played a role in this: someone who was involved in the struggle every day of their life? Maybe the youth want to be more active as well, only not 24 hours a day like people did before.**

You're certainly right about this. In the 60's, the people's movement experienced a phenomenal growth, so that everyone was busy all day long ("todo el mundo militaba todo el día").

But that wasn't so much conceptual, rather it had to do with the class struggle. You didn't "take part", rather you simply were a part of it all. No level of intensity can

remain constant in a historical process. There are historic moments, and then there are periods of calm. If activists come along with that old spirit and expect a lot from the youth, then they come into conflict with reality. Because times are different now. It would be different now if we were underground, or if we were being pursued by the death squads. At this time, it's pointless to be involved 24 hours a day.

This has led to a decline in both young and old activists. This is something aggressively approached. They get called civic and reformist, and this just offends them.

**We had the same phenomenon (in Europe). The mobilization during the Gulf War was initially really successful, and for those who are still organized, surprisingly so. But if you look at who was actually organizing things, it was the same old faces. The masses came, demonstrated, and then went home.**

In Uruguay, lots of people participate in demonstrations. Our books and magazines sell well. But few people attend meetings.

**So far, we've talked a lot about the mass-movement, elections, and coalition politics. In the beginning, you said all forms of struggle are important. Do illegal actions still play a role for you all?**

At this moment there are almost no illegal actions. Only the far-right carries these out now. Leftist leaders are threatened by death squads who do sometimes take actions.

**Is this an ideological question for you all? Is it that you think that armed struggle no longer has a role, and that you want to achieve your goals through legal means? Or is it simply that the historic conditions are not right at present for the armed struggle?**

It's more the latter, I suppose. It would be absurd to consider this an ideological question. If you handle it that way you'll just make mistakes, like if you decide to act illegally because of a doctrine or something. These are tactical and strategic problems which have to do with daily reality, not ideology. You only go underground if there's no alternative.

**So you only use weapons when they're necessary?**

Of course. It's always a question of what means are appropriate.

**A comrade of yours, Marenales, has suggested that the MLN might be driven into illegality again if you all are successful.**

That's not unlikely. If the left is successful, it will be driven into illegality. Uruguay is under a constant fascist threat. You don't have to quote Marenales for this. A short while ago, one general made it clear what would happen if the left won in 1994.

**How are you preparing for this?**

(laughing) Very well! Especially by strengthening the mass-movement. We have experience in working underground, and we pass that experience on to our friends and comrades, so that they'll be prepared if necessary. We must never lose sight of the threat we live under. The far-right certainly won't let anyone forget. Me and five other leaders have been issued death threats by a fascist group. That forces you to protect yourself.

# Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action Communique

(Editorial Note: The following introduction originally appeared in the 2nd issue of our Info Bulletin (July/August 1993) as an introduction to a shorter press statement that RARA released to the Dutch media before the release of the communique that appears.)

At 2am, the police and fire services received a call that a timed explosive device would detonate on the third floor of the Ministry of Social Affairs building in The Hague. A search of the building by authorities revealed nothing. Then, precisely at 3am, the bomb exploded, causing extensive damage to the building. Just like their last bombing, this blast originated in a toilet, but the damage affected most of the entire floor of the office building. When the automatic sprinkler system came on and sprayed liters of water everywhere, even more damage was caused to equipment in offices not directly touched by the blast itself. At the time of the explosion, no people were in or around the building.

The Dutch media went into full-effect immediately after the action. RARA made the smart move of issuing two statements regarding the bombing: the first, a press release, summarizing the main reasons for the action, which was sent to all major media, and the second, a much longer and more extensive communique, which was sent to left-radical media one day later. The capitalist media began acting like the mouthpiece of the BVD, the Dutch internal security agency, in the days following the action, printing allegations like: "Rene R. is one of the suspects in the bombing..." "The BVD knows exactly who carried out the action. It's a group of four or five people who were also responsible for the attack on Kosto's house..." All of this to make up for the fact that RARA have never been caught and are still - as this action showed - in a position to strike.

Unlike the aftermath of the Kosto action, the liberal-left were generally left speechless by RARA's communique. After the Kosto action, liberals complained that militant actions would only make things worse for refugees. But at this point, how can things get any worse? Illegal migrants cannot work or live in The Netherlands; they face constant threat of police brutality and immediate deportation if they are ever caught. In short, they are not considered people. So how can their situation be made any worse? Therefore, RARA's bomb was very welcome indeed. Not only was the action a blow to the state agencies responsible for the persecution of refugees and asylum-seekers, but it was also a blow against apathy, a wake-up call to the (radical-)left. We anxiously await "the next time". (adapted from the Dutch leftist bi-weekly "NN" #140)

On the night of June 30/July 1, after numerous timely warnings, we detonated explosive devices on the third floor of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The target of this action was the office of the DIA (Labour Relations Inspection Service - trans.) which is located on this floor. The DIA plays a key role in the hunt for illegal immigrants. On average twice a day, this service, along with local law enforcement agencies, organizes raids of businesses that are suspected of employing illegal immigrants. In the coming years, this service is to be doubled. This means more raids, more victims, more fear. With our action, we sought to draw the line and to let the man-hunters feel for themselves what it's like to be hunted. To let them know what it's like to be a target, to be stigmatized. Initially, we released a shorter press statement. In this communique, we'd like to take the time to go into matters more deeply.

## "Sobering, But Humane"

The illegals-debate has suddenly arisen once more. An optimist might say that this is because of the fierce reactions to the humiliating attempt by Rottenberg and Kosto to draw in the Bolkenstein right-wing last spring. The reactions were indeed fierce, almost encouraging one might say. Public comments from the PvdA (social democratic party - trans.) leadership, namely their apologies that everything slipped out so unfortunately, gives the appearance that they have retreated back to their corner. But sadly, things don't work that way. Policies stand hard and fast, and they are designed by a select club of bureaucrats and the ministers that frequent European conferences. Policy, one that backs out of the rules of the managed democracy. Torch-light processions, rallies, and demonstrations against racism give some hope that people won't just sit back and accept what's going on. But the politicians have charted their own course, and although they notice that the number of demonstrators is high, they realize that these people won't overstep the boundaries which dictate appropriate conduct in The Netherlands. So the politicians can keep doing what they are doing and remain relatively undisturbed. The hate-

campaign against illegals has been going on for some time, and now it has been given form in policy. A policy that dictates that illegals may be subjected to the most draconian and inhumane authority measures. Sobering, but humane; Kosto allowed commissions like the Zeevalking Commission to design a policy of starvation. The purpose is to make life for illegals impossible here. Illegals are a problem, that's the message, in differing but nonetheless harsh tones, which politicians from the right to so-called 'left' are sending out. A wave of accusations and insults are hurled at a group of people that are easy to attack. And not only at them. Everything that reeks of being foreign is suspected of being here for no good reason. It's easy to mobilize people on the fear that their wallets will be stolen. Mayor Peper said that police had discovered 1100 Turks all registered at the same address: "Busloads full of people come here, collect their welfare, and then go back to Turkey." Perhaps he didn't want to be outdone by his colleagues in Amsterdam, who said they needed to expand the police force due to the 15000 illegal immigrants from Ghana that were dealing drugs in the city. It doesn't matter that there are no facts whatsoever to back up these claims. The media spreads these claims, and the message does its work. News is news. A small note on page 17 in the newspaper a few weeks later, noting the errors of the previous story, has little effect. The tone has already been established. Anyone who thought that illegals would be left alone for a while has been deceived. If anything, this is the calm before the storm. Nawijn and Kosto recently added another shovel-full to the mountain of filth they have already spewed forth about illegals. This time it was the story that illegals must be deported before 'genuine' refugees can be allowed in to be housed. Yet another proclamation from those that have the power to make and administer policy. The course has been charted, and the hunt continues. Anyone trying to get a glimpse behind the scenes of the fatherland's political stage is left to ponder a question, like a wasp on a jar of honey: Where are all these idiotic statements coming from, that are so degrading and insulting to so many people?



## From 'Guest-Worker' To 'Economic Refugee'

Illegality is actually a political definition, nothing more, nothing less. In the 60s and 70s, businesses used to recruit workers who were wandering out of the countries by the Mediterranean Sea. Tens of thousands of these 'spontaneous immigrants', as they were then called, were allowed to find work. And a good thing, too, because the work they got was often hard and dirty labor, and there was a shortage of man-power. Between the mines of Limburg, the oil tankers in Rotterdam's harbour, and toilets all over, there was one thing in common: cheap labor did the work, provided these people were 'guest-workers'. This seemed like a strange way to treat 'guests', as they were described in the flexible political jargon, so something had to be done about the actual situation. This was actually quite simple: these people were only brought here for reasons of economic gain. The importing of 'guest-workers' was necessary to allow for the economic growth at that time. Those industries that had rapidly developed were hampered by a shortage of labor, thus a portion of the nation's productive capacity was not being utilized. This process had nothing to do with 'tolerance' or 'hospitality'. So it's even less of a surprise that this situation didn't last long. Ever since the 70s, a time of economic decline and increasing unemployment, this recruitment process has stopped. This policy was given the following credo: "Holland is not an immigration land." With the stroke of a political-judicial pen, 'spontaneous' immigration became 'illegal' immigration, and the state created its 'illegals problem'. This didn't matter that much to the migrants themselves. Their arrival wasn't dictated by the changing judicial categories of this country, but rather by the increasing gap between the rich North and the poor South. Illegals are, above all else, human beings. In search of a future, a little bit of happiness. People who have left house and home behind, in Turkey, Morocco, Ghana, people who have decided to flee from hopelessness in the hope of building a better existence here in the wealthy West. They don't succeed, they aren't wanted, and they are stigmatized as 'economic refugees'. Their motives for coming to the wealthy West are not accepted. Hopelessness is not a motive, not a reason to flee. What matters is their economic usefulness, not their economic and social emergency. But for illegals, there is no way back, they prefer the insecurity of an illegal life to the security of a hopeless one. And people profit greatly from this. The racist double-standard in the labor market and in the society,

which was created in the 60s, still exists today. In short, this is because 'guest-work' (read: poorly paid, boring, and difficult work) is not a temporary but rather a structural condition. It's a myth to think that economic growth makes labor more agreeable, let alone to think that everyone shares in the well-being. The 'guest-workers' are living proof of this, in spite of the fact that they are literally hidden away in invisible, cage-like, fire-hazard hostels and special neighbourhoods. Most migrants are already forced to the bottom of society, and for illegals this is doubly true. And they are shamelessly exploited. Thanks to their illegal labor, certain sectors of the Dutch economy continue to function. Illegal workers are cheap, because they are illegal. Everyone knows damn well that deporting these illegals would force hundreds of businesses in the food, catering, green-house, and cleaning industries to go bankrupt. Oppression, exploitation, and humiliation form the basis of the silent compact between the state, politicians, and industry regarding illegality. And these peoples, the numbers vary, but it's certainly not more than a sold-out stadium for an Ajax-Feyenoord soccer game, are supposedly the embodiment of the threatened destruction of our country.

## "To Keep The Problems Here In Control..."

The problem of illegals is only a problem in the (...) and in the realms of policy where things are threatening to get out of hand. And at a moment when things need to be speedily prepared for the coming European unity. At that point, some explanation needs to be sought for the non-stop horror film that is being played out at the Binnenhof (Dutch parliament - trans.), an explanation of the crazy ideas and the xenophobia that seems to be controlling politics in this country.

The political side of the economic and social restructuring of Europe is not going as well as they would like. The euphoria of the Europe of the Citizen is starting to wane, now that the contours of the Europe of Capital are beginning to take shape. At first, a United Europe seemed like an amazing, over-ripe apple tree which just needed to be lightly shaken to provide enough capitalist fruit for everyone. Now there is more and more fear and dissatisfaction with the political and social changes taking place. A struggle in primarily ideological terms is forming and reaching out into increasingly broad sectors of the population. These are all signs of a crisis of legitimacy wherein politics and the economic system are at fault. Racism is utilized to create a new sense of social consensus, over the backs of the 'others', the 'illegals', the 'foreigners'. Taking a crowbar in hand against the social contradictions. Kosto put it literally: "...remove them to keep the problems here in control...". Racism finds fertile ground in a land where, for as long as people can remember, the Western man has been the measure of all things; a country whose own colonial history has never been questioned.

## A Slice Of Bread And Satisfaction

Because the problems which the politicians are dealing with seem so massive, they have broadened their horizons. Not only migrants, but also other sectors of the population can now rejoice in the great importance which the politicians see in their existence.

What is immediately obvious is the connection which is being made between the so-called illegals problem and another huge social problem: unemployment. The problem isn't that there is a shortage of jobs, like the politicians want us to believe, or that their labor policies have been wrong for years. Unemployment seems to be a national disaster which the unemployed themselves have created. And more and more fraudulent reports are fed to the media, that x% of the population is cheating the system, 40% are cheating, 75% are cheating... Now we just have to wait for a report that says that in this or that neighbourhood, 132% of all welfare recipients cheat the system and like it that way. And politicians like Robin

Linschoten come to the original conclusion that welfare payments need to be reduced to people in those neighbourhoods and that the unemployed need guardians placed over them. First it was the WAO (a form of welfare - trans.) recipients that had to be taken to task. During the industrial restructuring one decade ago, entire sectors of the working class got stuck in the WAO reservoir. Ten years later, they are presented as profiteers and fakers so as to stop the expansion of the social services budget. This new work-ethic that is preached, often in connection with 'illegals', and linked to complaints of how our degraded and derailed society, in which welfare fraud seems to be a national sport, is simply a means to approve plans to cut costs. The notion of social security has become a short-lived myth that needs to be cut back. The conditions under which the welfare compromise, the welfare state, and social security were created were directly linked to capitalist expansion. That means, according to the margin of profit. The economic restructuring which is taking place at the moment, and whose goal is to secure profits and conditions to bring about new expansion, is coupled with a firm grip on production and labor relations and intensified competition.



Massive lay-offs and big problems at major corporations like Hoogovens, Fokker, DAF, Phillips, and KLM are the result. Unemployment rises sharply every month. The model of social security, formulated in a period of unlimited prosperity and growth, and which was supposed to serve as a safety net to catch those that nonetheless fell out of the boat, now seems out of place. Austerity measures, cutting benefit payments, and making the model less attainable for people by putting increasing pressure on the unemployed, the introduction of the notion of 'temporary work', forced re-schooling, and other such things are the order of the day. This has nothing to do with a policy that aims at full-employment, something which is impossible under capitalist relations. This also makes the call for 'more jobs' pointless. What kind of jobs? More polluting production? More useless products and services? Instead of fundamental discussions about a human interpretation of the notions of labor and production, a discussion of the social value of labor, a discussion of the fundamentals of an economic and social model, the needle remains lost in the haystack of the interests of the ruling powers. A climate is created in which work, at any price, is deemed acceptable, and thus the model of social security becomes minimal and even less accessible. The new work-ethic gives free-reign to draconian measures under this model. The welfare state has been making the underclasses artificially satisfied for decades now. That time is now gone. In the welfare state of the future, you can choose to rent your own cell, or a waterproof cardboard box. Or you end up in a re-education camp, chewing on a piece of bread with satisfaction, guarded by soldiers trying to imitate Elco Brinkman. There's nothing the politicians won't say to create a climate in which they can push through their measures.

The most direct and cynical manner of exploitation

is that of shame. As if it wasn't bad enough to introduce yourself as an unemployed person at someone's birthday party, now you are made to feel like total shit, a part of the legion of people responsible for all of society's problems. Exclusion, compulsion, and the limiting of rights, these will all become normal means of making this "God forsaken country", to use Lubbers' (Dutch prime minister-trans.) words, healthy again. The society is shaken up with a heavy hand, and a new jacket is fitted to its underside. New social divisions are created. Minimum-wage earners, migrants, so-called inactive people, these are the different sectors of society that are forever excluded from any sort of future, a future where no one has to stand on the sidelines, just as long as you work. "There is no bigger modern illusion, or deception, than the use of that one word 'work', something which is utterly degrading, painful, and socially inferior for some, and wonderful, status-enhancing, and economically rewarding for others." (J.K. Galbraith) This exactly describes the logic of capitalism. A system that generates world-wide wealth, precisely because it also produces poverty and sorrow, and that to an increasing degree.

## A Reactionary Neurosis

The great leap forward to a United Europe, which we are witnessing, is being lead by spirited language and crass proclamations. All the big mouths in the Binnenhof are trying to out-do one another in the category of messing up and making idiotic statements. In the search for an ideological glue to legitimize their policy approach, and no one is waiting for this except for the political and economic elite itself. Within the developed relationship between, on the one hand, the realization of European goals, and, on the other hand, the construction of concrete changes, lies the explanation of a number of specific mechanisms which set the political climate these days. To draw attention away from the underlying political and economic goals of this policy, the political elite tries to always focus attention on the internal necessity of taking these measures. "Fraud is ruining our society," said an angry Wim Kok (leader of the social democrats - trans.), who usually only gets emotional if someone questions his bookkeeping abilities. This is said to legitimize budget cuts with the goal of bringing the Dutch state in line with surrounding states. You see the same thing in the struggle against the moral decay which Holland seems to be suffering from, something which is called social renewal by the policy makers. This social renewal is the quasi-positive term which is really just a cover to create an ideological climate which will allow for more control. Politicians would like to present social renewal as the struggle against dog droppings in the playground around the corner, but under this same motto, new crime packages are enacted which increase the power of the state at the expense of the accused. Every escape and every act of petty theft is used to justify prison camps, bodily punishments, more cops, and iron-fisted politics. And you see the exact same mechanism in the paranoia around asylum-seekers and migrants. They are defined in terms of being an internal enemy, the fifth column, the death of Dutch culture. And all this to justify the decisions being taken at the European level to close all doors to migrants. The golden rule of advertising has taken hold of politics as well: Repeat something often enough, and you can push even the most nasty of products down someone's throat. Kosto's policy is the Iglo TV-dinner of Dutch politics.

The reactionaries are in control in the Europe of the 90s. In the gap between distress and ideology, an attempt is being made to push back all of the gains made by the left since the 60s. Through the unambiguous words of the growing extreme-right organizations, through the major parties' minority-debate couched in neutral terms, in the renewal of norms and values, and in the harmonization of laws and duties. After years of a combination of social

and economic impoverishment and the pointing-out of scape-goats, neo-liberal politics has dressed its monsters in brown shirts. The major parties then attack these extremists, thus giving themselves a respectable image, while taking another step to the right at the same time. Together they are creating political disorder, they are opening wounds and piously declaring that they are discarding taboos. It is this drift to the right that is deciding political relations. The fuss over illegals is nothing else but a licence for racist language. The fuss over welfare fraud is nothing else but a licence for control and repression and the linking of all existing databanks. The fuss over rights and duties is nothing else than a licence for eroding the social system and sticking people with flexible, insecure, and poorly-paid jobs. A reactionary neurosis has taken hold of politics. The nuances can only be detected by those with perfect hearing.

#### The World Of Peter Stuyvesant

A village-mentality is dominant in The Netherlands. Discussions about the causes and consequences of substantive developments hardly ever take place, let alone about the international relations which are involved. A kind of universalist lie is created, which functions as the basis of the defence of the West's privileged position. The economic war being waged against the countries of the southern hemisphere knows no changes from the transition from the Old to the New World Order. If anything, these changes have made it easier for Western countries and corporations to manoeuvre. Capital is moving across the world at an even faster pace, with anonymous institutions like the World Bank and IMF having ever more influence. It hides from all discussions, from all controls, from all choice. Countries and peoples are temporarily taken up into the 'course of humanity', used, and then tossed away like a pair of old socks. The international division of labor has ruined the Third World. The capitalization of agriculture has driven millions of people from the countryside to the slums of the big cities. Excessive cultivation of nature and the forced introduction of mono-cultures has led to an ecological disaster which is impossible to overlook. The hunger in Ethiopia, Somalia, and the lands of the Sahel is a direct result of this. It is cynically stated that the only thing some countries are capable of producing is refugees. And the West has no need for this export product. The Third World's debt now totals 1350 billion dollars. In contrast to 55 billion in annual development money, they are saddled with 154 billion in annual interest payments on previous debts. There are 80 million people world-wide who are fleeing from hunger, sorrow, poverty, hopelessness, persecution, and (sexual) violence. These are cold, abstract numbers which hide the terrible levels of human suffering which exist. As long as that suffering circulates in its place, everything's OK. As long as it stays circulating within the Third World, everything's fine. But if that suffering comes too close to Europe, all hell breaks loose. Instead of a discussion of causes and consequences, about the West's responsibility for the desolate conditions in the South, then you get a minority-debate on how to keep these profiteers outside our door. And increasingly, people state openly that it's their own fault anyway. After all, we send them development money and blue helmets, and what do they do? Nothing! Consciousness about the connection between the (neo-) colonial history of the West and the present refugee migration movement is crushed between the truth of right-left discussions. When the terms migration, integration, and refugees are presented, then people seem to suffer from an acute case of historical amnesia. Ideologies based on racism and white supremacy still form a fundamental part of Western culture. A Eurocentric view of the world permeates the thought of both the right and the left. The end of ideologies, of history, post-modernism, post-materialism, post-whateverism, these are all just philosophies, mind-games that are only relevant to a very limited part of the world.

From a situation of overflow, people presume that Stuyvesant is a good example of how people from other countries should act. The few refugees that ever make it to the West are looked upon with suspicion. If they are even admitted, then they are expected to be polite and listen to Bolkenstein. He goes through the entire liberal corpus, searching for elements of strange cultures. Racism is evident in all aspects of the administration's refugee policy, if one can even call it that. Or maybe this politicizes the question too much. Interests and contradictions are then put on the table, while everyone does their best to make the policies seem kind of funny and boring or whatever, but certainly not evil.

#### No Man's Land

The political and leadership crisis of the system, as we analyze it, does not mean that there are many possibilities for the militant-left to intervene. Of course there are lots of little dents and tears that undermine social consensus. But at the moment, there are not enough signs of a growing cultural and political resistance which is in a position to question the legitimacy of the Ayatollahs of liberal democracy. The political caste operates in a given manner in a no man's land. Just as the dynamics of European unity have started, it's more correct to speak of a management crisis than a happy ending, now that the weight of the Cold War can be thrown overboard. And everyone now finally agrees that the society we live in is the best there can be. They are lost in the wilderness, afraid that they can't fulfil their necessary historical task of completing Project Europe. Or the fact that maybe it won't turn out to be the Europe of their dreams, that doesn't matter so much. What matters is to push through those measures that are necessary for the next phase of competition, plundering, pollution, and destruction. Those sectors of society that are no longer needed in this right-wing paradise need to be kept in check, and, most of all, they must not affect expansion. Those people that already had politics and the society already turn their backs to them are now fed with cheap images of the enemy; everything's fine, just as long as discontent is not directed at the political caste itself. The left is operating in this same no man's land, but it is hardly able to utter anything significant. Many people have the will, but due to the pressure of the right-wing roll-back, no one seems to have the time nor the nerve to precisely analyze what's going on. In these times, when even a consistent humanist is considered a political radical, it is necessary that a radical, permanent, and uncompromising resistance exist. We want to break into that political field of power, with means that no one can negate. This is not merely an expression of radical opposition. Nor is it an unnecessary luxury in a time when the body-snatchers go into action right after a Boeing jet crashed into Bijlmer (a high-rise apartment neighbourhood in Amsterdam where lots of migrants live - trans.), so as to deal with those illegals once and for all. It is also necessary to react to all the lies in this country. Sure, the parliament can adopt an anti-racism law that states: "We maintain that respect for all people is a fundamental part of a democratic society, and everyone living in The Netherlands may share fully in our society; we shall do all we can to combat discrimination and to be a good example ourselves." And then they go on and continue making their policies which contradict these nice words. The same politicians that define racist policies then march at the head of demonstrations against the hatred of foreigners. And dropping people off across the border is called 'courageous'. It is of strategic importance that we place our fingers on the pulse of the fundamental contradictions of the post-Cold War era in the so-called liberal democracies. Breaking into political conditions usually doesn't win any applause or bouquets of flowers. The shock waves that went through The Netherlands in November 1991 were significant. At the risk of journalistic wrath, everyone immediately set out to distance themselves (from RARA's attack - trans.). And

who was not guilty of this? Committees and organizations gave their Pavlovian reaction and individuals distanced themselves, as though Kosto himself had been attacked. What people feared was being excommunicated from the (already marginal) political sphere from which they could exercise political influence. And there was also a great fear that there was no way in which people could give a substantive reaction. Even on the left, everyone was sure what they didn't want: no more bombs, not on people, not in that way, and especially not at this time. Only later, when the asylum policies were sharpened even more and structural violence increased, did the positions change somewhat. It also became more clear the trusted democracy had had its time. How can political influence be exercised, if the boundaries and rules of the national policy game are dictated at the European level? It's no surprise that the cabinet is on a collision course: the course has been set and it will be put through at any cost. Lubbers' call to the employers' associations to hold the line and to allow for strikes, so that WAO cuts could be pushed through, is indicative of how hard-line Holland has become. Street protests are dealt with by letting riot cops have their fun. The question remains whether those youths and students that demonstrated in The Hague on May 8, many of them for the first time, will have had 'politics driven home to them', or whether they are now too intimidated to fight for their rights. It wouldn't be the first time that a movement has been wrecked by the arrogance of power, symbolized by the barking and biting blue line. Our militancy arises from such experiences. For us, it is an option, in conjunction with other methods of struggle, to force a necessary broadening of political possibilities to open up and break through the relations here which have rusted shut. To fight for the necessary space in which a political and cultural counter-movement can further develop itself and grow out into a counter-power.

Breaking into relations is not a question of immediate successes. It's not a matter of forcing Kosto to resign, after the November action, and to atone for his actions by sheltering an illegal immigrant in his cellar. We wouldn't want to subject any illegal immigrant to that. A new wave of radical resistance, like that of the early-80s, is not realistic. You can't just call out and create a resistance, nor can you immediately mobilize people. You can't just cry out that you want a 'counter-movement', no matter how much you want one. Resistance also doesn't come into being 'of its own accord' when the system takes its next step in its long history of humiliation and destruction. What we want to do is make the political self-truths and the borders of political discussion and action, as they are being defined, perfectly clear, in a way that no one can ignore. Nowhere are responsibility and guilt so clear in the debate as they are with respect to Kosto and Bolkenstein. We want to put this element of responsibility back on the political agenda. We want to draw the line and to put a price on policies that are inhumane and degrading. A policy with a name and a seat in parliament, one that can be attacked.

#### Their Struggle, Our Struggle...

Our politics are certainly internationalist in their orientation. Any form of left-wing politics that is not internationalist has little perspective. Except for the fact that the conditions under which people around the world live are always changing, internationalism is a historical truth. The liberation struggles in Latin America, Vietnam, and South Africa were an inspiration to many people, and they led to a consciousness about the West's organized exploitation and oppression of the countries of the southern hemisphere. But still, the left can no longer rely on the perspectives of struggle that were relevant in the 70s and 80s. The liberation movements and struggles have changed their character. The revolutionary storm of the late-70s and early-80s, under the influence of the

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# Revolutionary Cells Communique

## The End Of Our Politics - Armed Resistance In The 90's

We have given up our present form of militant resistance in our region. We took this decision after our attacks on the State chancellor's office in Dusseldorf and the Ministry of Social Affairs in January of 1991 - actions which remained without results. Just like most of our actions, the actions in January were focused on refugee policies and, in particular, against the irregular treatment of the Roma by the provincial government in North-Rhein-Westphalia. (1)

We based our conclusions on the standpoint that the form and structure of our struggle was an expression of a specific phase in the development of the social contradictions in Germany since 1968. With the collapse of real-existing socialism, the reunification of Germany, and the "New World Order" sketched out in the second Gulf War, this phase was unmistakably changed. With the new project of "Great Germany", the social contradictions have by no means become less severe. The contradictions are permanently reproduced here and are exported to the fringes of Europe and to the Third World. The events of 1989-90 can be historically analyzed: the definitive leap of Germany to super-power status, the reformation of Europe (including the former East Bloc countries) under German hegemony, and the coming-into-being of the New World Order with all of its social and military-strategic consequences. The developments require an entirely new level of organization of militant and revolutionary resistance. But we can only formulate this as an empty pretence. In reality, we have been run-over by history.

The conditions for left-radical politics in Germany have changed drastically in a short period of time. The starving off of the left in general, including the autonomist scene, from which and in connection with we have always generally operated, is maybe just a by-product of this process of change. But our politics was fundamentally based on this level. We can't go on as the representatives of a historical tendency in Germany from the 1970's if everything has since fallen apart. Our own actions over the last few years have taken place in a vacuum and we no longer part of a broader social practice. The coordination of our politics: armed opposition - carrying over - anchoring - broadening; these no longer work. The point of reference has shifted and structures have disappeared. The struggle against the "colonization of people's minds", which was always our standard, needs to take place in a different manner if we are to draw conclusions from these changes. We are not prepared to carry on our politics without some form of interaction between legal and illegal forms of struggle. That would always mean: without control. Nor do we want to ascribe a legitimacy to our method which is independent of concrete historical conditions just because there's nothing better to do than go on with the politics we have chosen. If we want to remain as political subjects, then we are forced to think of something different.

The end of our politics is connected with the existence of a new national and international context and a radicalization of imperialism, the consequences of which we cannot predict. What is certain, however, is that migration is the most important indicator of this development, one which the Western countries will be increasingly confronted with and influenced by. Whether conditions of uprisings or adaptation will result in the Western nations, this is still unclear. So is where the eventual fractures will be. The struggle in the proletarian sector, in the sub-cultures of young migrants, the struggle of the social injustices faced by women, of the victims of deregulation in the East - at this moment, we can't tell. We



will be confronted with images in which the emancipation of a class is not to be seen. And our analytical instruments are not adequate to decipher the meaning behind the various forms of appearance. So there's nothing left, except to discuss the historical process, or to grasp back at hierarchical-patriarchal, antiquated political models and modes of communist organization. Or to hastily craft new ideologies, which again measure the present contradictions of the completely open situation with a mono-causal world-vision.

### Isolation

Let us, now that our attempts to bring about a revolutionary situation in Germany are behind us, look at the causes which brought about our end of involvement. Maybe a look back at the developments and turning-points in our politics can offer some clues as to how we can again play a role in social conflicts.

In the 80's, we tried to develop a militant politics in our region, one which was always based on the principle of 'anchoring' and 'broadening'. Anchoring in an active left-radical environment and, where possible, in social conflicts which reached beyond the left-radical scene. We tried, with our actions and communiques, to couple proposals which were politically oriented, rather than placing ourselves in a vanguard position ahead of the legal resistance. Initially, the proposals were the result of an anti-racist and internationalist orientation in support of the black liberation struggle in South Africa. Later came our campaign against imperialist refugee policies and the agencies responsible for such policies. At the end of our refugee campaign in December 1987, and when we resumed our actions to support the Roma peoples in 1989, we were very conscious of our isolation. The lack of anchoring in our political environment could no longer be compensated for by sporadic accompanying rituals from the scene. The action of the BKA (2) in December 1989, against structures of those like us and the Rote Zora (3) who were taking up "attack-relevant themes" (4) like gene-technology and refugee politics, showed just how far this 'loss of contact' had gone and just how thin our protection was. Although the state didn't have any concrete successes as a result of this, the criminalization of 'attack-relevant themes' did come about. The legal left was not prepared (and we ourselves left off) to go on an offensive with the criminalized themes and to thereby protect our part of the campaign against gene-technology and refugee politics. Instead, the broad and hasty support was instead given to the victims of the repression, not our politics. This shift in orientation, from thematic work to an aspect of direct repression, was in important factor

which lead to the collapse of many of the legal structures which we had directed ourselves towards. For ourselves, involvement with the events of December 1989 became a substitute for politics. This finally led to hasty internal difficulties for the Revolutionary Cells in general. To be more precise: we are now convinced that the wave of repression at that time was not what broke our politics. Rather, the BKA acted at a time when the over-load of illegal actions, especially in the area of refugee politics, had become an increasing problem.

Over the last three years, as we tried to link up thematically with the refugee campaign and to intervene in the conflicts between the officials in North-Rhein-Westphalia and the racist laws and threatened deportations of the Roma people, we weren't so much bothered by the police as we were by frustration. The open solidarity groups either not even recognized our actions, or they refused to enter into the political conflicts with the government.

That which we always sought to avoid happened nonetheless: we were alone, with no possibilities for exchange. The motivation for armed intervention could only be subjectively maintained. This situation we regarded as the death of politics, and an opening of the door to terrorism and arbitrary actions. The weaknesses in our politics in the real of refugee policy were made clear by our inability to get other groups from our spectrum onto a common course. Our proposal in 1990 was to get all the groups in the Revolutionary Cells to begin an anti-racist and internationalist campaign. Our reason for this was the nationalist reconstruction of Germany; also the hate-campaign by the state and the mob against 'foreigners' and the social-technical construction of a 'refugee' and 'gypsy' problem. This proposal was not taken up. Some parts of the Revolutionary Cells structure thought that a new, anti-patriarchal orientation could get the Revolutionary Cells over its down-period, without having to have a fundamental discussion of the Revolutionary Cells in and of itself. On the contrary, our group did not want to take up the common orientation on the theme of 'patriarchy'. The importance of this theme and the necessity of its being discussed are clear to us. But we found the state of the discussion insufficient and the theoretical gaps too large to be able to work out any possible relationship between legal and illegal struggle or to distill any sort of armed politics from it. From a historical standpoint, maybe we could have added an emancipatory element to the patriarchy discussion, if we had been able to carry out a common politics with the women of the Rote Zora, instead of trying to bring us closer through our insights and conduct. But that is another history.

In short: in the internal Revolutionary Cells discussion on patriarchy, we don't see any manageable political starting points. Even if the 'man as doer' is put in the forefront and politics replaces personal views and we 'distance ourselves from the male definition of power', we still see this whole direction as one which is self-discouraging and de-politicizing, rather than as something which gives new input towards social-revolution. In any case, anti-patriarchal struggle won't help us past our present pressing crisis, namely the fact that militant and armed struggle, such as we have tried to develop, has become the concern of increasingly fewer people and seems to no longer have any social basis.

We became political fossils when the left in both West and East Germany seemed unable to react to the consequences of the reunification. With this passivity, with the failure to formulate any alternatives, and the total inability propose, even theoretically, any internationalist

perspective to counter the rise of nationalism, the left disappeared as a domestic political factor. Even the Revolutionary Cells were swept out of the historical process by this passivity. We couldn't offer any clarification of the events which, as it seems, were set to shape the 90's: German hegemony in Europe, the Gulf War, and the collapse of real-existing socialism. Even our own anti-imperialist and social-revolutionary models of clarification have failed with respect to this course of history.

We have been dragged along with the disappearance of leftist utopian ideals and the communist systems, even though our own political history placed us miles away from that which was real-existing socialism and which deservedly went bankrupt. We had always maintained that Bolshevik communism was just another a form of control. Our practice did not orient itself to the question of power, but rather to the development and broadening of social self-determination from below. Still, this bankrupt system is thrown at our feet and we can't just act as if the perverse forms of communism which we were in power don't concern us. It's damn hard to argue for a theory of social liberation, much less revolution, in the European metropolises at this point in time. An abstract reference to the global victory of imperialism, hunger, and the suffering of millions of people is not enough. The Albanian refugees in Italy were just a prelude to the undermining of Fortress Europe which will affect the relationships here. At this moment, we don't see how armed actions can solve this lack of political perspective and bring about mass revolutionary politics in Germany. The form and means of armed struggle, as we know all too well, easily becomes an end in itself, a substitute for political strategies.

## The Refugee Campaign

We suspect that already during the refugee campaign in the 80's, and the closer look given to the so-called 'social question', that our isolation reached a point of no return, although we were striving for just the opposite. We had hoped that by thematizing on the new class relationships and the social exclusion of the underclass that we had found a way to possibly approach a revolutionary subject and to anticipate its struggle. This was supposed to break through the limited orientation on single-issue movements (like squatting and the anti-nuclear movement) which we and rest of the autonomous left had concerned ourselves with since the 70's. Our fixation on these movements brought us to a crisis, since we seemed to have had false expectations, interpreting them as microcosms of a general social upheaval.

We also tried, by formulating a 'concrete anti-imperialism', to break through the rusted one-dimensionality of old leftist internationalism. We saw a possibility in binding the social themes with the refugee campaign for developing a whole new arena for international solidarity in the West.

What we didn't fully understand at that time, or what we didn't have an answer for in any case, was the division which first became visible in this campaign of between the theme (refugees) and those who we were orienting ourselves towards (the left-radical scene). We envisioned a possible progress of the global expropriation struggle by refugees in the metropolises. Representatives of the world proletariat, against which the state had to take special measures, which also in part applied to the populations in the metropolises. Of course we didn't think that there would quickly develop ties between the refugees and the proletarian classes who first had to overcome their racism. But we fantasized that the refugees would demand of the metropolises their share of the society's wealth. A form of direct anti-imperialist struggle, linked with the resistance experience in the Third World, and thus also a terrain for our politics. When this struggle, in which we had wanted to take part, didn't come about (instead were the many 'reformist' demands of asylum-seekers), we compensated for this with an

analysis of the state's refugee politics and attacks on its responsible agencies. We made the business of the refugees our own business, without concerning ourselves with their subjectivity or expectations, indeed without even knowing them. This 'refugee politics without refugees' seemed necessary. It came out of our experiences in open refugee work and was supplemented with a theoretical analysis of the state's role in migration. But with this we lost a real opportunity to enter in on the 'social question'. Maybe because we thought that the problems such a step would entail would be too great for an illegal group. But also because there were no exchanges at that time between the left and the refugees. In the attempt to link social themes to refugee politics, things only flowed in one direction. We abandoned the old issue-movement terrain in order to gain an all-encompassing perspective on social change. But we never questioned our own form of organization, nor the methods or goals of our own actions; and we remained oriented to the left-radical milieu.

In the meantime, the left, whatever remains of it, can no longer ignore the continual sharpening of the situation of refugee and asylum politics, attacks by the state and racists, and the threatening environment faced by refugees. It has become necessary to at least protect their right to stay in Germany. Paradoxically, this comes at a time when we have found ourselves isolated by our attempts to do just that.

## Myths

Until now, we have limited ourselves to calling the loss of our organization and the resulting tension between our own revolutionary pretensions and real political developments the end of our politics. But there is a more fundamental problem. The question should arise: How can a formation like the Revolutionary Cells achieve its idea of anchoring and broadening with the use of certain limited forms of struggle?

The Revolutionary Cells came into being in the early 1970's when the discussion about revolutionary violence was not a taboo and was very broad. Armed resistance - even though only actually practised by a few people - was seen by many people as legitimate, and as something which characterized the dynamics of the global class struggle. The armed groups were a part of the revolutionary spectrum according to the left. In the factory struggles in the 70's, the squatting struggles, the youth and disenfranchised groups, and especially in the developing women's struggle, initiatives were seen as part of social change. The experiences of the Latin American guerrilla as a necessary part of the mass movement on its way to revolution was of central importance for the struggle in Western countries for several years. The notion was transplanted here, and the "storming of the headquarters" seemed within the realm of possibility.

The massive repression of the state led to the initial process of losing solidarity. The German Autumn of 1977 (6), the anti-nuclear movement, and the orientation of the autonomen on single-issue movements were the end of this phase. After the repression against our organization in 1977, the Revolutionary Cells linked their political fortunes with the conjectures of the issue-struggles. The Revolutionary Cells went behind these, complemented them, and saw new seeds of revolution in them. The Revolutionary Cells went beyond the limited goals of the issue-struggles, in so much as they maintained a fundamentally revolutionary orientation. In this phase, the Revolutionary Cells succeeded in stimulating a readiness for militant resistance within the single-issue movements through exemplary examples of the practical methods involved and by making armed opposition a notion which became anchored within the leftist political culture. The themes changed and were arbitrary and shifting (anti-nuclear, Startbahn West (7), the squatters' movement, the peace movement, gene-technology, etc.), but the credo of the Revolutionary Cells remained the

same: armed resistance is possible. Our anchoring, or our impression of it, was expressed in the propaganda and broadening of militant and armed methods of resistance. This anchoring seemed to mirror our acceptance within the radical-left. The more broad and militant the resistance became, the better we were able to decide upon our actions. We carried them out in a manner which allowed for no contradictions within the movement. That's why we avoided the level of 'power confrontations'. The slogans "Struggle for the hearts and minds of the people!" and "Create many Revolutionary Cells!" represented this broader concept.

The struggle against Startbahn West, when massive open resistance was coupled with illegal actions, was the high-point of the Revolutionary Cell operating there. It had a clear role to play in a regional struggle. It united the general acceptance of the use of violence with its interventions - for us, and example of the successful anchoring of revolutionary politics. In a much more limited fashion, this was also the case with the campaign against fare increases on public transportation in the Rhein and Ruhr areas, during which counterfeit transport tickets were distributed in various neighbourhoods. This was a small example of cheering people up with illegal, cost-saving undertakings.

The concept "Create many Revolutionary Cells!" was only achieved in so far as parallel methods of struggle arose. We weren't able to get a stable footing in the single-issue movements nor to convince militants to leave their structures to embark on a revolutionary project and organization. The squatters' movement is an example of this. The willingness to use militancy had grown, and the use of similar forms of struggle as our own were the expressions of a broad political culture of resistance. The broadening of our methods was visible in each annual report issued by the BKA. But still, for the autonomous squatters, we remained more a 'myth' than a part of their struggle. We had scarcely any connections with the new generation of squatters and youths, except for an abstract for of armed support.

In our fixation upon methods of struggle, we failed to develop a theoretical political orientation with more content than mere isolated pieces of decor in various conflicts. Our social-revolutionary theory was at best a mosaic of the sum total of our communiques and analyses of actions; a group, a strong tie was not possible.

The RAF, with its analysis of imperialism and its orientation on the liberation movements of the Third World, threw out a theory which became a part of the propaganda of its supporting groups. With the 'front concept' (8), the RAF in 1982 sketched out a framework for the ideological expansion of its political work. We don't want to discuss the mistakes of this concept here, because this paper isn't about their mistakes, but rather about ours. Behind our insistence that our methods of struggles were "methods for everyone" was hidden more an actionistic rather than a political theory. Our fundamental revolutionary pretensions did not correspond with the goals of the issue-movements, and in response to the increased splintering of autonomist structures, we couldn't formulate a unifying perspective. So our strength lay in our 'myth' and in the openness and easily imitated nature of our actions, and in our willingness to intervene in social conflicts which possessed a certain explosive force.

Our theoretical work was generally limited to the conflicts which we participated in. In that sense we were involved in theory formation. In the development of the refugee campaign, this theory formation went beyond the boundaries of the issue-movement. We thereby expanded the levels of confrontation. Objectively speaking, that was a first step out of the self-limitations which our method gave rise to. Actually, this campaign should have led us to re-evaluating our means and methods of struggle. But this didn't happen. We just recycled a form of the social-revolutionary guerrilla whose continuity

was formed by carrying out certain armed actions. The most important trademark was still the symbolic bombing.

The dialectic between armed resistance and mass struggle was hardly visible. Our own subjective decision at carrying out political conduct past certain boundaries, in the form of armed actions, and the approval of the left of our actions led to our seeing this - falsely - as the rise of a system-threatening revolutionary force, a first step in the revolutionary process. Did we really think that with such a reduced program that we could influence the complexity of social change with all of its political, cultural, social, and organizational facets?

Apparently so! Because over the long course of the history of the Revolutionary Cells, our manner of intervening has changed little. We have limited ourselves to sabotage actions and destruction, with its political workings in the form of statements to the media, and in the extreme, this meant that an action might as well have not even taken place if it didn't make the headlines. Nothing could more clearly document the distances involved in the social process. No theme that we discussed, no analysis that we made opened any new perspective to us for new forms of intervention. We reduced the expected social liberation which we propagated to the deed of actions against always the same objects. As if by constantly repeating the same method we could subjectively contribute to revolution. As if that which we sought to achieve, namely being part and promoter of revolutionary forces, could be brought about by this self-limitation. Our actions remained predictable. Our tight-grip on traditional methods and objects in the refugee campaign was the nail in our coffin.

But still there was a reason for retaining to some minimal methods in the revolutionary struggle. On the one hand, we never made our methods relative, because we never used them in the context of the class struggle, but always as part of the leftist scene. But on the other hand, we never went beyond these methods, because they were perfectly in line with our anonymity and they limited the personal risks involved. This anonymity produced (luckily) no heroes. No one could be called to responsibility; it could have been anyone.

This meant people disavowing certain ideas and propaganda. They were not identifiable. Without any known members, and no prisoners to act as propagandists, the Revolutionary Cells were but an abstract idea. In this abstraction lay the strength and weakness of the Revolutionary Cells. They were strong because they were independent of its militants, the idea of armed resistance could live on, and solidarity rested not on people but on actions. But this abstraction and anonymity also limited the effects of the propaganda and decreased the political perspectives and intervention terrains. The possibilities for confrontation and attack were limited. Precisely in this logic lay the self-justification of the means, just as a campaign was limited by a lack of suitable objects. This resulted in the isolation of our politics.

Today, in a time of racist attacks on refugee camps, the use of fire and flames as a method of struggle for revolutionary politics has to be excluded. But more important in the question of why our methods are not only labelled as 'terrorist' by the ruling powers, and compared to the bombing of synagogues, airplanes, and department stores with hundreds dead. The belief that all that matters is who uses this method and to what degree is to oversimplify matters. We cannot practically oppose the discrediting of resistance and liberation struggles by the global spreading of a dirty campaign of 'international terrorism' which has been spread by secret police organizations. This has become a big problem when it comes to the use of revolutionary violence.

With this piece, we don't want to call for an end to revolutionary politics. We also cannot speak for the entire structure of the Revolutionary Cells, of which we

are but one part. But what is clear is that ever since the 70's the lived experiences with militant resistance and armed struggle are no longer adequate for identifying the present crisis and clearly analyzing it. We want to fall silent and try to find an offensive way out. What we mean is, the myth of the Revolutionary Cells has not been victorious, but rather the time has come to close out a phase of history. Rusted structures and methods of

## ...RARA Communiqué continued from page 18

Sandinista revolution, which swept through Latin America, faded away with the election defeat of the Sandinistas. The way in which the revolutionary process in Nicaragua was sabotaged, through hunger and war, has led to the idea that imperialism has triumphed and to the long-term question of how to develop new struggles and strategies. Some are trying, after decades of hard and bloody conflict, to consolidate their position at the negotiating table and to effect change from that position. Guerrilla movements have reformed themselves into legal organizations and some have chosen the parliamentary path. And then there are the struggles in the slums, the struggles of base movements, the struggles to change day-to-day life. Some of the popular organizations that came into being in the relative political spaces created by 'democratization' have grown into powerful movements. All of these developments have confused the European left. Just as fast as the hope for quick revolutionary change has faded, so, too, dies the very interest in it. Solidarity movements are falling apart or disbanding themselves because there's no more work to be done. Mandela is free, the ANC and De Klerk are 'on speaking terms', and elections are coming soon... And that has always been the weakness in the way in which the left has taken on internationalist or anti-imperialist struggle.

The left has made itself too dependent on attractive struggles being waged elsewhere and has not shown the effects which imperialism has back here. Despite the consciousness of linking the struggle there to here, the struggle was generally too relative to the conditions there. The collapse of solidarity movements, for example, those concerned with South Africa, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, says a lot. But support is just as needed now as it ever was. It remains true today that the best form of solidarity to fight for changes here. The European left is now more dependent on itself, in a certain sense, and needs to now find its roots in its own society. More attention needs to be paid to our own experiences, history, culture, and tradition. Fighting for fundamental changes in Western societies is not only of importance to the self-determination of countries in the 'Third World'; it's also about living conditions, freedom, and self-determination here. In other words: their struggle, our struggle, international solidarity.

What this is about is a consciousness of connections. Cause and effect need to be placed in the correct order once again. Europe was born from slavery, genocide, and colonialism. Our welfare system is the result of centuries of oppression and exploitation. Our so-called 'multi-cultural' society is a product of a colonialist past and a neo-colonial present. Increasing racist aggression, violence against migrants and asylum-seekers, smear-campaigns against illegals, and the closing of borders to refugees are all examples of this. And just as they are written off so that the few may profit while the many are degraded, great groups of other people are becoming victims to the golden calf of capitalist progress. There is much to be won in the struggle for fundamental change!

## Room For Change

We went to the floor where DIA has its offices. This agency plays a key role in the hunt for illegals. The raid on Blokker (a Dutch department store - trans.) gave just a hint of their potential: they utilized dogs, helicopters, and 120 cops to comb through a distribution centre looking for people with suspicious skin colour. If a

struggle must be abandoned in order to have a chance at again becoming political subjects in the contemporary social processes. The political disbanding of the Revolutionary Cells seems to us to be a necessary step towards this.

## Revolutionary Cells

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person's nationality was dubious, they were made to say the word "kwartje". If their pronunciation was not Dutch enough in the finely-tuned ears of the bureaucrats, they were taken away. A stamp on the hand and they are transported to city hall, where a smiling CDA politician remarks that compulsory ID cards could have prevented all of this. But these cops aren't above carrying out smaller actions as well. Day in and day out, they ride around in their little vans, carrying out raids. The agency was created in 1987 on the assumption that unemployment can never be solved so long as there are still illegal immigrants in the country. Recently, their efforts were rewarded with a doubling of their budget and manpower. That means, more raids, more victims, more degradation, more fear. Their location in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Relations illustrates the link between the erosion of social security, the hunt for illegals, and refugee policies.

We don't want to look on meekly while human lives are ruined. While racism stealthfully becomes part of normality. We let the DIA man-hunters have a taste of what it's like to be hunted. Now they know what it's like to be a target, to be stigmatized. We are struggling against a policy and a political culture where victims fall but where the victimizers are never named. The struggle against asylum- and refugee-policies is a struggle for a humanitarian society. A society that offers everyone a future! Where no one has to fear hearing a knock on the door in the middle of the night, from an agency that ruins lives with cold calculation. To reach this goal, we need to create a space for change, by means of actions, building structures, and exchanging and examining ideas. We wanted our action to be a part of this process.

Until the next time,

**Revolutionary  
Anti-  
Racist  
Action**

July 1993

## Clarification of names from this communiqué:

Rottenberg: head of social democratic PvdA party, racist, often speaks of the "clash of cultures".

Bolkenstein: head of parliamentary fraction of the right-wing VVD party (Party of Freedom and Democracy), Holland's third-largest party, he's very big into spreading anti-Islam hate.

Peper: mayor of Rotterdam, very racist, likes to spread lies ("1110 welfare cheaters at ONE address!") and xenophobic sentiments.

Nawijn: director-general of internal affairs at the justice department, highest bureaucrat in this area, 15 years at this job, maintains the secret so-called 'Nawijn list' of countries which allegedly false refugees come from.

Kosto: minister of internal affairs, responsible for refugee and asylum policies in The Netherlands.

Linschoten: an ambitious, young VVD conservative politician.

# Interview With A Revolutionary Cell

*Last year, one Revolutionary Cell (RZ) released a discussion paper, in which they announced and explained the end of their politics. Since then, there has been an all-encompassing discussion of the positions of the Revolutionary Cells and their actions, one like there has never been before. We, another RZ, one that has been active around the refugee campaign, would like to make known our critiques of this and to put forward our own positions. Some comrades from Radikal have written down some questions, which we are now writing public replies to. Our interest is that these questions and answers be discussed further, because we feel that a broad discussion of the refugee campaign and of the politics of the Revolutionary Cells is very important right now. We cannot be and do not want to be separated from people and groups who are developing radical resistance, and who have put forward militant politics up until today. This discussion will have an impact on our further politics. We think that the discussions concerning the paper "Gerd Altbartus is Dead" are important as well, although we do not touch on these at this time.*

*Read and discuss this text, do not be sparing in your critique, and write something about it. Pass it around, publish it in your media. Anyone who would like to discuss the history of the Revolutionary Cells and the Rote Zora up until today can now get a collection of all the assembled texts in the book "Die Früchte des Zorns", published by ID-Verlag. (- from the introduction in Radikal #147 - an illegal autonomist magazine in Europe.)*

**Radikal:** You all do not belong to the traditional line of the Revolutionary Cells. How did you come to the decision to call yourselves an RZ? In order to come into a political connection with the refugee campaign of the traditional line and to make some continuity from this, you could have chosen a different name. Then you could have made it known that you are different, but still part of the refugee campaign. Why did you decide differently?

**RZ:** We need to explain something further regarding this. We are a group of men and women who range from the autonomist to the feminist spectrum. Even before we joined the refugee campaign as an RZ, we were involved in developing a militant resistance. On a thematic level, we had not established ourselves, but we always sought to renew an internationalist outlook. We saw our actions as part of the discussion around militant resistance. But the hoped-for discussions never came about.

We asked ourselves the following questions: How can we bring some political continuity to the highs and lows associated with movement-orientation? How is militant resistance to be envisioned and further developed as a part of this? The Revolutionary Cells were and still are one attempt at bringing continuity to the militant resistance. They never stated that militant struggle was the only main focus. Their declared wish was always to be a part of the movement, to take part in its positions and discussions, and to know its strengths and weaknesses. This self-understanding, we believe, is still relevant today.

We believe that the concept of "de-individualization" which was propagated by the Revolutionary Cells - we call it "broadening" - namely that as many groups as possible should independently organize themselves as Revolutionary Cells, is still correct. Every group should decide on its own expectations for its own militant struggle and should work on its own content in discussions. We support this, even if we have criticisms of how this concept has been taken up and changed around.

As late as the '86 refugee campaign, it was not clear whether the principle of the Revolutionary Cells was still valid. The "de-individualization" concept was no longer propagated. For the first time, the refugee campaign was made into a major focus, without there being any movement within the radical-left behind it. This, and the fact that the refugee campaign was being carried out by a closed circle of Revolutionary Cells, raised the question in our minds of whether it was even possible to take part in the refugee campaign as an RZ. Based on various convictions, we decided that it was. For us as a mixed group, it was important that we draw on the history of both militant groupings, the Revolutionary Cells and the Rote Zora. We realize that we cannot avoid the contradiction of opposing patriarchal structures as a mixed group. Only through permanent discussions can a basis for cooperation be made in a militant group. That doesn't mean that you must get held up on each point. Women

organize themselves independently of men and mixed groups, partly from confrontation and the setting of boundaries. There were problems between the men and the women in the Revolutionary Cells, and the women drew the necessary consequences from this.

We are part of this history in the history of revolutionary struggle in Germany, because we sought this not only in our minds, but also in our hearts.

We want to orient ourselves along with other militant groups and begin a common discussion. This seemed more feasible to us within the Revolutionary Cells, because of their long history of resistance, than with other militant groups, whose continuity we could not estimate. The decision to struggle as a Revolutionary Cell was, at the same time, out contribution to the continuity and unity of the further development of a revolutionary resistance. We wanted to present our proposals and questions so as to advance the refugee campaign.

We had in mind our conviction to make known this step of our practical intervention and to begin a discussion. These attempts, for different reasons, were not correct for us, and we see it as a mistake that we did not seek this dialogue before our action, because our goal was also to dismantle the myth of the Revolutionary Cells. But our approach only reproduced this myth.

**Radikal:** What ties you all to the original concept of the Revolutionary Cells? Do you still follow the concept of "de-individualization" ("Create one, two, many..."), which the Revolutionary Cells used to propagate?

**RZ:** We are tied to the original concept of the Revolutionary Cells, which is still a useful concept for us for further developing a form of revolutionary politics.

The quality lies in autonomist organizing, which takes into account unsimultaneous political and structural matters, but still allows for the possibility of common organizing so as to become a political factor. Behind this concept is the view that resistance should not be limited in terms of its practical action possibilities.

This concept transports the experience that militant politics can be developed from out of day-to-day life and the legal associations. We continue to see in this concept the possibility for a broadening of the slogan "Create one, two, many...". But not conceived of as an action-model, whose means are separated from the political content discussion. Something along these lines: action, discussion, anchoring, de-individualization. This is too linear and static. Discussion, anchoring, and further political development have to be imbedded in a process of discussion and exchange. And by political discussion, we mean more than just releasing communiques.

**Radikal:** Do you see yourselves as an avant-garde or as part of a movement, in which you simply have a different praxis?

**RZ:** The answer of this question depends on what political context you use the term "avant-garde" in.

This term has its understanding in ML-politics. For our structures, this term is useless, because we (should) have a different political understanding, from which arises a different form of organizing.

The problems and contradictions within our structures cannot be understood or solved with this notion. But this notion gets utilized nonetheless, so as to make conflicts and contradictions clear (for example, informal hierarchies, male political consciousness, vagueness, etc.). Even the choice between "avant-garde or part of a movement" does not solve these problems.

When, for example, a group takes an initiative and thereby makes political pretensions, then discussion work becomes decisive. If this does not succeed or is neglected, then the initiative becomes isolated. This distance is then often explained with the notion an avant-garde. Frequently, the tension between militant and non-militant praxis becomes a problem, because a hierarchical valuing of methods gets applied.

**Radikal:** The traditional line has, to a certain extent, abandoned this concept (de-individualization), without offering much comment as to why. How do you envision cooperative work between the Revolutionary Cells and the so-called legal movement?

**RZ:** Over the last few years, there has been no cooperation with the legal movement. We think this is because the process of exchange has been abandoned, or at least not developed. This inability, to be always present in the political process as an RZ, is something we all face. The praxis of the Revolutionary Cells is only deemed to be marginal, and their contribution to revolutionary politics seems to be relatively modest. We don't think that world historical changes are what have led to the weakness of the Revolutionary Cells, but rather our own neglect, mistakes, and unclarity, but also the lack of reference within the movement. We envision cooperation, but what problems and contradictions does this involve?

One problem is anchoring the politics of the Revolutionary Cells in the unsimultaneous nature of left-wing struggles, both in terms of content and methods. From this come the problems of discussion and exchange. This isn't simply about the fact that a political orientation isn't taken up, for example the one spelled out in the Münster/Düsseldorf communiqué in '89. At that time, it was increasingly clear that the left had taken up the regroupment demand of the political prisoners as its focus, and along with this was the solidarity movement for Ingrid Strobl's trial. Thus, to simply carry on with the refugee campaign and to simply side-swipe the unsimultaneousness ("repression won't be broken by simply protesting against repression itself, but rather by anchoring social-revolutionary politics") was wrong and brought no results. The relationship of exchange between militant groups and the movement won't come about automatically and is not established by simply releasing action communiques. Militant actions can't be monolithic features on the political landscape, and their results can't simply be left up to political dynamics.

To further develop a process of exchange, and to broaden it, we see the following things as being necessary:

- The movement must actively involve itself in the open discussion which has been started concerning the self-criticism of the Revolutionary Cells.

- The militant groups must make the public discussion of their relationship to the movement an open one.

For this, we need a common discussion forum, and Radikal, for example, has been very helpful in this.

In general, the Revolutionary Cells need more of a presence, and they need to take part in actual debates and events and to join in the discussion. The Revolutionary Cells need to think about re-activating their own communications medium ("Revolutionärer Zorn").

The exchange should also involve refugee and immigrant women and men, so that the discussion can also be carried out in those areas.

**Radikal:** Within the traditional line, there were never very many concrete proposals of how to tie their own structures into larger spaces. The authors of "The End of Our Politics" wrote: "In the fixation on our methods of struggle, we failed to develop a political orientation which contained more than background pieces on certain conflicts. Our social-revolutionary theoretical understanding was little more than a mosaic of the sum total of commentaries and analyses of various fields of resistance, thus a solid connection was not possible in this manner." They stated that the method of struggle which they themselves propagated as a "method for everyone" was, in fact, more of an action-method than a political theory. There were times when it was massively taken up (for example, during the anti-Startbahn and anti-nuclear movements). But upon reflection, these really just seemed like small tastes of rebellion, which did not develop long-term organizing. What significance does this method have for you? Do you have an idea of how to link your praxis to the organization debate?

**RZ:** It is, of course, true that the concept of the Revolutionary Cells has not yet been able to further develop itself in terms of organizing content. But a convincing concept of content on its own will certainly not guarantee this further development, thus this can be abandoned as well.

The same is true for practical matters. No developments can come from praxis alone. It's up to the process within the movement itself to make it possible for a concept to be further developed, because this can't be thought of or adapted in a static manner. A militant group, just like any other group, must be flexible, so that it can react to social changes or to developments within the left and be present for further action. That means that it is wrong to become fixated on one form of struggle or to have it become ritualized, because nothing is made dynamic or further developed from this.

No group or association can avoid this process. The movement's organizational structure clearly shows its mess. No grouping can assume that another group will take up content or practical proposals, join in the discussion, or become a part of the work. This condition has to be kept in mind when doing actions, because a division of labor is a two-way responsibility, and not a discussed

consequence of the movement. Every group also faces the necessity of taking all the work upon itself, which implies very high demands and which can quickly lead to too much pressure. That also means that campaigns which are initiated need to be reflected upon and discussed, if the possibility exists that nothing will develop from them.

The Revolutionary Cells also attempted to start discussions which were not sufficiently taken up and discussed (concerning the murder of Karry, knee-cappings/Korbmacher, Love Song). As for the refugee campaign, the discussions should have started much earlier. An organizational debate is also necessary and must concern content, and not primarily methods, if a broad base is to be sought.

There were phases when militant methods were taken up on a massive scale, and we think this is because, from the status of the political confrontation, more political sense was derived from the concrete experiences which pointed to such methods. The fact that no long-term organizing came out of this is, we think, due to the fact that the political movement at that time failed, in that it was not able to develop any communication of a political content or perspective. Continuing to carry out militant actions will not rescue a failed political situation.

**Radikal:** In the open discussions which have been carried out between different Revolutionary Cells over the past year, it has become clear that their organizing was oriented towards praxis. Without a doubt, it is necessary to link practical concerns, but there's still the danger that things will fall apart if there is no commonly-discussed content orientation behind this structure. How do you all evaluate the contradiction between practical organizing and content agreement?

**RZ:** We don't see things exactly as you do. At least as far as the refugee campaign is concerned, there had to have been a content agreement between the various groups involved.

It's very difficult for us to come up with a satisfying answer to this question. We have not taken part in these internal discussions.

But, we can come up with some general criticisms, about the "action-model", for example. But the open discussions up until this point don't offer much of a basis for coming up with a definitive judgement. The clarity which is needed for this is up to the groups involved to achieve. Various estimations regarding this, what happened and how, have been made partially clear in previously published papers ("The End of Our Politics", "When the Night is Deepest...the Day is Nearest", "We Have to be as Radical as the Reality").

For us, it's still unclear whether these deal with fundamental differences or belated reassessments of positions. In the mid-80s, very fundamental discussions

were carried out. The differences in content led to consequences (the departure of the RZ that wrote the paper "When the Night is Deepest..."). This process was made known, in a fragmentary manner, afterwards. That makes the discussion difficult. By going it alone, the RZ that wrote "The End of Our Politics" probably gives a good illustration of the actual situation regarding the internal discussions. It's also difficult

to assess the Rote Zora and their relationship to men and to mixed groups. We think it's important that the Rote Zora make known their opinions on this.

When looked at from the outside, the contradiction in the paper "The End of Our Politics", for example, between having an anti-racist or an anti-patriarchal focus, does not seem irresolvable to us. Of course there's always the presupposition that we can never get around looking for political paths where both common and split factors can be expressed in praxis.

But without considering the real conflicts which took place in the content discussions between the groups, then such statements won't amount to much.

**Radikal:** You all have taken up the refugee campaign of the traditional line. To what degree did you all link yourselves to the "existing" common ground, where do you all see the cornerstones, and where are your differences?

**RZ:** Our positions have developed further since the time when we decided to link up with the refugee campaign. What we are saying here is an expression of our own present discussions.

The refugee campaign made it clear to us that anti-imperialist politics and solidarity can and must also relate to refugee women and men here. We share the opinion of the RZ from '86: "What is happening at the moment is a gigantic restructuring of the world's population, whose size greatly overshadows the migration movement of the 19th century, and whose form in the metropolises up until this time is only the tip of the iceberg." This puts the left in a bad light, since there has been so little consciousness of how refugee and migration movements are the result of imperialist exploitation and destruction politics, and since there has been so little discussion of the situation and living conditions for refugee and immigrant women and men here.

We see a good possibility in the refugee campaign for thematizing on various lines of social contradiction, for example, to make clear patriarchal, racist, and capitalist-imperialist exploitation- and oppression-relations. There's also the potential that the refugee campaign can revive other thematic lines and struggles, for example, against population politics and sex-tourism, labor and housing struggles and neighborhood work, anti-fascism, and opposing European unity. Already at the time when we made our decision, the social-revolutionary content of the Revolutionary Cells' refugee campaign was unclear and not present enough. The analysis and definition of the revolutionary subject, to which "disqualified proles, unemployed youths, and marginalized people" belonged, is gender-neutral, and yet decided upon by men. Women, if they are present at all, are left on the fringes.

Behind this hides the hope that a certain segment of the population can be designated as the revolutionary subject based upon social and economic criteria. We think this is wrong, because the riots and revolts of this so-called underclass then get analyzed and over-valued. We have given up looking for the revolutionary subject, and we do not see it in refugee women and men.

Opting for the refugee campaign was, for us, an attempt to seek some common ground with open groups already working in this area. We think it's important that political work is done on all levels to resist imperialist refugee policies, and that cooperative work is developed along side the refugee and immigrant women and men themselves.

A further difference lies in our experiences in solidarity work and anti-racist work. These things clearly influenced our discussions and proposals. Working together with refugee and immigrant women and men, and experiences with their own struggles, these things forced the left (which was and is active in this area) to discuss its own racist structures and to test out its notions of anti-



racist work. Along with this, we also had to discuss, for the first time, the notion of racism as a fundamental pillar in the pushing through of exploitative relations and their present-day form. You can't just wish your own racist structures away, rather this is much more straining and difficult than was originally thought.

**Radikal:** How do you envision a broadening of the social base through an engagement in the refugee campaign? The discussion of this theme requires a high level of consciousness, and thus seems to get stuck in limited circles and interests. Perhaps a social-revolutionary approach could better be followed in neighborhood, squatting, or labor struggles?

**RZ:** Of course we hope to find a social base for our politics, one that can possibly broaden. But for us, the question remains: What content do present-day struggles contain? Men lack self-criticism of patriarchal content, and they reproduce these in their relations, just as whites generally are not willing to take on the consequences of racist oppression, which is something we also profit from. This approach requires a consciousness and a willingness to discuss your own ties to the system. But sadly, this is not the rule. But that's why an attempt at thematizing on forms of oppression is so necessary.

Under certain circumstances, there is a bigger chance that struggles will develop and broaden from neighborhood, squatting, and workers' struggles, because their perspective implies a bettering of their own conditions. But such struggles are not by definition emancipatory. For example, the struggle to keep your job can be tied to racist relations and racist exclusionism. The racist consensus in the society makes it clear that we need anti-racist work to be carried out in all reaches of society.

**Radikal:** Except for a few analytical notions in some communiques (Lufthansa Köln 10/86, Münster and Duesseldorf 5/89, administrative office in Böblingen 8/91), the refugee campaign has not had a real anti-patriarchal outlook and thus has not developed any forms of practical change. And the one paper on this theme, "What is Patriarchy?", came out of nowhere and did not mention the refugee campaign, and it did not result in any conclusions, reactions, or discussions among the Revolutionary Cells. Within the Revolutionary Cells, neither a theoretical nor a practical outlook was developed, and no attempts were made to take up this theme. The authors of the paper "The End of Our Politics" characterize their level of development on this theme as not politically viable. How do you all see this? Do you all discuss the possibilities for how men or mixed groups can make practical attempts and actions against patriarchal and sexist structures? And if not, why?

**RZ:** In the three communiques you mentioned, the references made to patriarchy were not very comprehensive. We think they are indicative of the level of development of the present-days groups with regard to the anti-patriarchy discussion. As far as women are concerned, they certainly are not indicative of the level of their discussions, but rather more of that of the men in the groups.

In our group, the women do not advance positions that the men themselves have not worked on. That means a permanent political contradiction for the women in the group. For the men, it means further advancing their own discussion of patriarchy, to give the group a better basis for further praxis. The women don't feel that a better basis is just discussions of feminist theories and working with anti-patriarchal themes, but also destroying such relations in ourselves and in the group.

The reality for the men is that this advance has not really come about, but rather has hit upon conflicts and confrontations. Thus, they limit the possibilities for action and expression by the women in the group. If the women reflect upon all the contradictions and various

differences in starting-points between the women and men, then there seems to be little basis to justify a mixed group. The fact that the group does exist is due to our history and the conditions which have arisen from this. The contradictions and fragility behind this decision means that our association is always in question or in crisis.

This has been the case up until today in the patriarchy discussion between men and women in the left-radical movement nation-wide, and it has set the conditions for mixed-group politics. As for the men, the discussion paper "What is Patriarchy?" is an example of this. This paper did not advance the discussion among men very much, because typically the male roles were left out. This distance was clear to us in the language, among other things. It did not seem like a group discussion.

A discussion of these problems has put us in a situation of contradiction and conflict more than once. Not only the theoretical unclarity, but especially the relations of men and women amongst themselves often revealed the gaps between an attempt and a lack of change. We need to take the necessary amount of time for this discussion. But still, this independent discussion among men needs to be visible to the women, so that the foundations for mixed-group politics can continue to exist.

To summarize everything once again: As for the possibilities for practical initiatives and actions against sexist structures, we are weighed down by all the uncertainties and reservations. On a theoretical level, we have arrived at a consensus, which was nonetheless possible despite the conflicts, but that doesn't mean that it has always been a liberating experience for the women.

The objects, structures, and people that can be attacked from out of feminist associations cannot be proposed as targets for attack by us, a mixed group, given our present condition. As a mixed group, we think it's right to point out the sexist structures in all attack targets, and there's much to be done as far as this is concerned, and this could give a basis which allows for more possibilities on the perspective level.

These conflicts, which also break out between men and women in mixed left-radical groups, need to be openly discussed, in order to make possible a further development of content and praxis.

**Radikal:** The Revolutionary Cells' practical targets for attacks during the refugee campaign were generally the institutions and organs responsible for state racism against refugee and immigrant women and men. The theoretical basis of the refugee campaign is more broadly envisioned. There, links are made between imperialist exploitation, the plundering of entire continents, the collapse of subsistence economies, and thereby the basis of life for millions of people, and these are seen as causes for the global tide of refugees. These links are not visible in the targets attacked. But surely there could have been some actions during the refugee campaign which also made clear the imperialist foundation of state refugee policies. For example, the Rote Zora action against the Adler corporation, whose orientation encompassed several different themes: 1) Productions by a metropolitan corporation in a nation of the Three Continents. 2) The exploitation of women's labor. 3) Intervention in an actual labor struggle.

Have there been discussions about not doing this, seeing it as too big to handle? Were there political arguments for concentrating exclusively on objects and persons responsible for state racism?

**RZ:** We can only answer this question in reference to ourselves, because we did not take part in the internal discussions within the Revolutionary Cells, nor do we now. In the way in which the refugee campaign began and further developed, it seemed plausible to us to concentrate momentarily on state racism as the target for

attack. It was made clear what role the ruling powers' refugee politics plays, and how it is pushed through at the different levels, from the social bureaus to the refugee divisions to the administrative courts. Along side the structural manner of functioning, the campaign was also a discussion of those persons who are responsible, to expose the racism of the typewriter bastards. On a perspective level, we think this campaign can be expanded, because it has a theoretical basis. It offers the possibility of dealing with all exploitative relations and structures of exclusion, both in terms of their differences as well as how they function together.

Practical change can only come on the basis of a fundamental content which gets worked out (see the discussion of patriarchy in the previous question). Of course there can be attacks against women traders in the refugee campaign, people who make their money in the slave trade of refugee and immigrant women. There can also be attacks on corporations and capitalists, who make capital by employing the refugee and immigrant women and men who must sell their labor very cheap here in the metropolises. There can also be attacks on fascists and their propaganda structures, as well as attacks on the mainstream media, which carries out racist and sexist smear-campaigns against refugee and immigrant women and men. The fact that there haven't been any such attacks as a part of the refugee campaign thus far is an illustration of the present state of the content discussion and its contradictions.

With reference to the Adler action, we have a different view. The Adler action was developed and carried out from women's associations. Therefore, it's not really possible to compare this action to ones carried out by mixed groups, for the reasons stated above. The fact that this action was so well received, we believe, was due to a combination of public work, an applied method, extensive damage, and the fact that the demands of the women Korean workers were fulfilled. We don't agree that the Adler action dealt with more themes than actions within the refugee campaign.

An action from within the refugee campaign can expose capitalist, racist, and sexist exploitation interests all at the same time. Thus, policies regarding deportations and the functioning of "foreigner laws" work as a selection instruments in the capitalist evaluation of refugee and immigrant women and men. The sexist aspect of these laws is made clear by the fact that women's independent reasons for flight are often not accepted, and this is responsible for the fact that women's immigration is often at the level of the marriage market or forced prostitution. Moreover, thematizing on the grounds for flight exposes the roots of the corporations in the Three Continents.

**Radikal:** The orientation of the refugee campaign on the leading organs of state racism seems to overlook racism "in the people". Here's a quotation on that from "Zorn-Extra, 9th newspaper of the Revolutionary Cells, Oct. '86": "Anti-imperialist politics in West Germany had, until now, focused on solidarity with liberation struggles in the Third World and on fighting against the war machine here. We don't have any illusions that common interests can be developed between refugee and immigrant women and men in West Germany and sectors of the West German underclass. Nonetheless, anti-imperialist politics need to be introduced where racist class divisions tend to break out."

The authors of this quotation assume, throughout the whole text, that racism is an instrument of class division which is utilized by the ruling powers to divide the proletariat. Today, the proletariat and other strata have shown their own expressions of racism (like the pogroms in Hoyerswerda, Mannheim, Rostock...) and have followed their own interests ("Foreigners out!"), and this has often gone beyond the boundaries which state racism deems acceptable (the murders in Mölln).

The pogroms, the massive attacks, and the murders of refugee and immigrant women and men show quite clearly that the proletariat and other strata of German women and men have internalized forms of domination, which get expressed as hatred of anything "other" than themselves. This form of racism, unlike state racism, does not differentiate between the utility value of foreign people. This internalized mechanism of domination has not been analyzed that much in discussions of racism. For much of the left here, the white metropolitan proletariat is still seen as the hopeful bringer of revolutionary change, and its racism is made harmless by claims that they are "manipulated from above".

The refugee campaign has primarily oriented itself towards state racism. You all assume that the struggle for the right for residency for refugee women and men will remain isolated from circumstances of the white proletariat. "We still don't know whether anti-imperialist politics can make a link between the refugee question and lines of conflict in the guaranteed sector, but the struggle for the right for residency for refugee women and men is also correct, even if it stays mostly isolated from the white proletariat here."

How do you all account for the development of the last three years, where racism has not only been ignored by broad sectors of the population, but that the population and certainly the proletariat have shown themselves to be deeply racist?

**RZ:** The faults of the refugee campaign up until now have been self-critically reflected upon in published statements: "Among other things, we see one shortcoming in the fact we have only focused our struggle on state racism, on the administrative divisions dealing with foreigners, the courts, and those responsible for deportations. Only afterwards did we reflect on the racism present in broad sectors of the population." (from "We Have to be as Radical as the Reality"). We agree with this self-criticism, although we think the focused initiatives on state racism which were made at that time were good.

In '85/'86, the politicians opened a new round of the smear-campaign against refugee women and men, in an effort to legitimize new measures of scaring off, heading off, and selecting refugees. For example, the DDR was tempted with interest-free credit, on the promise that no refugee women and men would be allowed into West-Berlin without a visa; asylum regulations were sharpened, in that the administrative courts greatly curtailed the recognition criteria for refugee women and men. The climate within the population became more heated as well, through the creation of tent cities. This resulted in attacks and violence against refugee women and men and their homes.

This dimension of racism within the population has been very overlooked, not only by the Revolutionary Cells, but also by the entire left, the Autonomes, and the feminist movement. The notion of racism was reduced (seen merely as a tool of division utilized by the ruling powers) or hardly given much content.

In the meantime, we have realized that internalized forms of racist thoughts, actions, and feelings are organizational characteristics of the structure of capitalist society, colonialist history, and Germany's specific nationalist past. This process of internalization is continually reproduced in people. To what degree the ruling powers are responsible depends on the person, we believe. That means that one's own feeling of self-worth is increased by excluding or devaluing others, in order to protect one's own privileges and material interests. In the process, people are not simply victims or products of

social relations, but rather they are active subjects.

We were not able to predict the degree of the social developments of the past few years, and the accompanying outbreak of racism. One fundamental crystallization point for this development was the "Reunification", and the accompanying outbreak of racism, anti-semitism, and nationalism. The existence of two separate German states was always a visible sign of the defeat of national-socialism. With "Reunification", the post-war era was declared to be over. Germany can now wear its brown shirts once again. The time of restraint and atonement is over. Germany may, and shall, feel itself to be a full nation once again. But this national feeling is not easy to recapture after 40 years of separation. The social and economic differences are too great for this. The only thing which all these people have in common, given all of these differences, is their German-ness, their so-called German identity. This solidifies their status as patriotic German citizens. It binds them to the alleged superiority of German culture, norms, and values. If these ideas seem faded in a few individuals, then there's always the willing link-up to the ruling system of domination. The construc-



tion of a German identity requires, at the same time, the construction of less-important ethnic groups, who are marginalized and seen as strange people.

The "Reunification" broke many taboos. The people are once again proud to be German, German history is being revised, pogroms, expulsions, anti-semitic actions, and racist murders are happening again, and these are being seen by many people as legitimate political means and they are openly applauded.

The nationalism of wide sectors of the population allows the ruling powers to, for example, deploy German military forces abroad. Thus, German imperialism can use not only its economic, but also its military power to establish and expand itself within the EC and across the globe.

The radical-left has been generally helpless in the face of these developments, because our political theory and praxis up until now has been too limited. Even militant attacks on institutions of state racism are only one part of the struggle.

That's why it's also necessary to build up legal structures, which not only make it possible to provide protection from racist and fascist attacks or their structures, but it also allows for the possibility to intervene in public discussions. We think it's wrong to take a yes-or-no approach to political means when confronting the general public. We need to win people over to an anti-racist alternative, even if they don't agree with every one of our positions.

**Radikal:** In addition to "the population's racism", we also think that the "left" is not immune to racism. Do you all agree? If so, how do you all address a self-criticism of this?

**RZ:** In your previous questions, you characterized the proletariat as "deeply racist", although you then say that leftists are not free from racism either. This manner of formulation and differentiation is, to us, an expression of our own unclarity when dealing with racism.

As leftists, if we say "deeply racist", then we mean nothing less than the fact that our thoughts, our feelings, and our relations are tainted with internalized racism. This is often only subtly expressed. In the discussion concerning white spots in anti-racist politics, the left is still at the very beginning. In the refugee campaign, this point has not been addressed at all. Charges of racism against leftists and feminists are justified. This should lead to our willingness to address the Eurocentrism of our own theoretical viewpoints.

We can't speak of a common front between Kreuzberg, Los Angeles, and Rio. When we here in the metropolises seek to explain relations and to derive our politics, we can't simply take relations from other societies, especially those of the Three Continents, and act like the people there. Quickly-formulated common links overlook the complexities of domination relations. This

is also true when trying to work together with refugee and immigrant women and men. In the political day-to-day, and in working together with refugee and immigrant women and men, it is necessary to test your own relations for racism. Sure, we can sensitize ourselves to act on a reflex to our own racism, but as for taking on racist relations in the future, often in a subtle manner, we are not immune. We often precipitate "positive racism" by attributing characteristics to refugee and immigrant women and men that fit with our vision of them. And there's also the danger that we leftists will learn to adapt our relations externally based on criticisms, but without bothering to undertake any fundamental discussions or change. Men have reacted in the very same way to the patri-

archy discussion, without making any independent thoughts of their own. But we must do this if we hope to find a basis for working together with refugee and immigrant women and men. That means actively thematizing on our own racism.

**Radikal:** What is your opinion of the triple oppression discussion, particularly as it is presented in the paper "Three Into One"?

**RZ:** We see the triple oppression analysis in "Three Into One" as an attempt to expose the various different violence relations and their interconnections. It brings an analysis which has been developed over the past few years within the Black women's and lesbian's movement into the mixed autonomous- and militant-left. Therefore, it is a very important text.

The fact that it has been so enthusiastically received, which does not mean that it has also been worked into people's political understanding, particularly with men, has surprised us somewhat. Maybe it causes some relief in the hearts of many men, because it is one of the few texts in which a serious attempt is made on the part of men to discuss racism and sexism and to arrive at a differentiated position. We can't address the content of "Three Into One" right now, because we cannot do that in such a short space, nor would we want to. To make our answer clear, we are not very far off from this paper in terms of our own analytical approach. There need to be closer discussions of this analysis, and we intend to have such discussions.

**Radikal:** The authors of "The End of Our Politics" linked the effectiveness of the refugee campaign to the inde-

pendent resistance of refugee women and men here, and they say they were frustrated by the absence of such processes and struggles. Here's a citation from the paper "The End of Our Politics": "We never held the hope that close ties would be formed between refugees and the proletarian class here, ties which could bridge racist gaps. But we did fantasize about the desire of the refugees to demand their share of the wealth in the metropolises, as a direct anti-imperialist struggle, combined with experiences of resistance in the Three Continents - and this would be a possible terrain for our own politics. When struggles of this type, which we hoped to make reference to (and which caused us to overlook the 'reformist' demands of asylum-seekers), were absent, we compensated with an analysis of state refugee policies and attacks on reachable agents."

In your praxis in the refugee campaign, did you support yourselves with such expectations, and what role does it play for you all that refugee women and men don't display the desired potential for unrest? Or that processes of cooperation between refugee women and men and the social sector and the radical-left have not amounted to much, although there have been some attempts? We don't want to neglect the experiences of support groups, who have resisted state oppression and racist attacks alongside refugee women and men.

**RZ:** But even the experiences of these support groups and their work show that we have a Eurocentric outlook and that we produce positive racism.

Refugee and immigrant women and men are not generally coming from liberation struggles and positive resistance in their homelands. But they still often bring with them political experiences and they live and defend themselves here under different conditions than we do. The primary interest of most refugee women and men is not to wage an anti-imperialist struggle here (with or without us). Many refugee women and men are supporting the resistance in their countries for the first time. Often, the main interest of refugee women and men is to live safely in Europe and to protect their existence. The fact that they often, in our eyes, follow a reformist and survivalist approach, something which we are ignorant of and reject, is due to their conditions and interests. The fact that we immediately view their political work and resistance as unacceptable, or completely disregard it, is our problem. This is a white problem. We know this "frustration" from false expectations all too well, and this is reason enough on its own to discuss our own racist projections. We need to make the following differentiations:

- between individual refugee interests and reasons for flight and the fact that increased migration has become a problem for the ruling powers and the population of the metropolises, namely it has become a problem for their welfare and control;

- between conditions of living and struggle of refugee women and men in the Three Continents and here.

Refugee women and men can't be seen as a homogenous group any more than the "underclass", the "proletariat", or women can. They come from different countries and were and are organized in different political parties, something which even makes cooperation amongst themselves difficult. The white left often overlooks and even ignores this fact. When we seek to orient ourselves to refugee and immigrant women and men, then we need to sincerely question our own proposals and expectations, because otherwise there's the danger that we will exercise a paternalistic and contrived form of solidarity, instead of developing and supporting genuine solidarity and resistance together.

**Radikal:** The RZ that wrote "The End of Our Politics"

stated that many anti-racist structures have fallen apart, and that their campaign had not achieved its desired resonance. We see things differently. For one thing, there are, at least in some regions, far more groups doing work on this theme than there were in '86, when the Revolutionary Cells began their campaign. What's more, we think that this campaign was an important reason why many Autonomes, even before the present wave of fascist pogroms, began to take up this kind of work. We ourselves were made aware of many things thanks to this campaign. Many actions which were carried out in '90 and '91 would not have been possible without the "preparations" which were made by the Revolutionary Cells. Do you all agree?

**RZ:** Since '90/91, many people from the left-radical and feminist movement have started anti-racist initiatives or have begun discussing racism. Whether or not the refugee campaign initiated this anti-racist work is questionable. Certainly, many comrades took a positive relation to the refugee campaign, but this usually amounted to little more than expressions of satisfaction after isolated actions from the Revolutionary Cells. As to what degree the refugee campaign has influenced contemporary political work, that is difficult to estimate and is still unclear. There was never a two-way political discussion. We don't know of any anti-racist group that openly voiced agreement with the content orientation of the refugee campaign.

We think that a far more decisive factor in the mobilization of the radical-left were the independent struggles which were waged by refugee women and men themselves. For example, the march of shame by the Roma through Nordrhein-Westfalen '90, the church occupation by the Roma in Tübingen '90/91, the church occupations in Neumünster '91, and the Norderstedt-church and TU-university occupations in Berlin '91/92. During all of these campaigns, the left was called upon to turn its slogan "Increase International Solidarity!" into praxis. And by supporting these campaigns, there were many experiences, but there were also questions within some groups of how a continuity of anti-racist work could be achieved. What we found particularly good and important was that many groups that did support work then reflected on their political work and discussed it. But the on-going discussion was only carried out by anti-racist groups and parts of the radical-left. The Revolutionary Cells were hardly involved in this. On the contrary, the political developments of the last few years have been ignored by the Revolutionary Cells, particularly by the group that wrote "The End of Our Politics".

**Radikal:** At the present time, parts of the radical-left are involved with an anti-racist political initiative which is tied to antifa work. In response to the fascist offensive and daily attacks of foreigners and refugee women and men, a practical form of anti-fascism and anti-racism has been taken up as a broad field of intervention. Can you all, as an RZ, see yourselves as part of this movement?

**RZ:** Due to overlapping content, the orientation of the refugee campaign is very close to the antifa-movement. The horror of the murders and attacks on refugee and immigrant women, men, and children, homeless people, disabled persons, and leftists has had practical consequences, especially for antifa associations. For example, contacts have been made with refugee women and men, there have been protection vigils and hostels, and there have been attacks on fascists and fascist structures. But the necessity for action tends to push reflections on mistakes and better strategies to the background. Racism and anti-semitism used to generally be discussed mostly within the fascism discussion, and even was placed in the back. Even the slogan "Against racism, sexism, and fascism!" has hardly been fulfilled by mixed groups. In the struggle against racism, the theme of patriarchal violent relations often falls out of the picture. There are still no workable

strategies to combat outbreaks of racism and right-wing organizing. The slogan "Attack the fascists wherever they are!", which is often shouted at counter-demos to fascist mobilizations, can't be used to combat racism within the general population. Other strategies need to be developed for this. Of course, this requires that the Revolutionary Cells undergo self-criticism, because attacks on institutions of state racism don't do much to counter the racist consensus in the population.

Whether the antifa associations will develop a continuity of anti-racist work depends on the content workings and willingness for discussion of the anti-fascist and anti-racist groups. In the struggle against the ruling powers' refugee policies and racism on the streets, there are plenty of common possibilities, and with some work, a common basis for resistance can be developed.

**Radikal:** Soon, the asylum-clause will become more restrictive (actually, this has already happened, when Germany changed the asylum-clause, Article 16, in its constitution on July 1, 1993 - trans.). A "deportation agreement" is being signed between Germany and Rumania concerning the Roma people. This means that fewer and fewer refugee women and men may enter Germany legally. Many more refugee women and men will have to come in and live here illegally. Will this sharpened situation affect your theory and praxis?

**RZ:** The new asylum policies won't have much effect on our fundamental outlook. State policies as early as '86 were already geared towards illegalizing refugee women and men. Certainly, the politics of separation are a means of selecting refugee women and men. A further building-block for this form of politics are the asylum laws and Article 16 of the constitution, etc. We think that the agreement with Rumania, and the resulting deportations, will make possible a cheap detention of a certain number of refugee women and men and will make a cost-efficient labor force available at all times. The agreement signed with Rumania will certainly be a model for other European nations. Those refugee women and men that simply are not wanted will have to keep on living and working in Europe illegally.

Refugee women and men, particularly illegals, are seen as good for temporary, very mobile, and extremely cheap labor, and, at the same time, they are expendable. The ruling powers in Europe have relied upon illegal labor for years. Many sectors of capital and the economy simply cannot do without it. Illegal women must often sell themselves in the sex industry (pornography, prostitution, marriage, etc.).

A further goal of racist and sexist market policies in Europe is to put the illegals under increasing pressure in their existence, that way the market value for European workers can be decreased as well. This pressure is increased by attacks on welfare, living assistance, and social programs, and by increasing rent and the cost of living at the same time. Through this comes a further redistribution of social work, to the detriment of women.

After Mölln, the ruling powers wanted people to refrain from carrying out racist violence against guest workers and immigrants, because they are needed here. But the illegals could be supplanted as a "new" object of hatred, who then can count on little support from social groups. That's why illegal refugee women and men need to be focused on in our struggle against racism. The living conditions and structures of resistance of illegal refugee women and men in Europe will surely change, and it is against this background that our praxis of supporting their struggle will be derived and developed.

The state's interest is to divide refugee women and men from immigrant women and men. We need to carry out common anti-racist actions against this. The clearing of a path for racist selection - even on the part of union, Green, and church circles - must be offensively and politically opposed. Attacks on state institutions that

organize such selections, as well as on the representatives of capital who directly profit from the labor of illegals, are necessary.

**Radikal:** Street-fighting and looting, the use of molotovs, militant attacks on police, many things which were once exclusively practiced by leftists, are now being used by the right-wing in their political struggle, and thus these means have lost their clear definition. Some examples which get cited are the massive firebombings, looting, and rioting by right-wingers (with the support of the population) in Rathenow (Brandenburg) or the attacks by right-wing youths on the police-watch in Senftenberg. These means are no longer the property of the left. There exists the danger that our actions will be equated with day-to-day right-wing actions. The attack by the Revolutionary Cells on the refugee administrative division in Böblingen in August '91 was reported by the media as an attack by right-wing extremists. The authors of "The End of Our Politics" represent the opinion that the use of fire and flames today is not appropriate.

The actions of the traditional line against Korbmaier and Hollenberg [government officials kneecapped by the RZ's - ed.], or stealing or destroying the files in administrative offices, these are targets of actions which clearly disrupt the right-wing apparatus. These are in no way the targets of right-wing attacks. We would like to see a close and imaginative discussion of how to reach our goal. When dealing with ZAST [referring to the Böblingen attack - ed.], for example, and all of the files and computer data there, maybe it would be better to remove the files and computer disks rather than burn down the building. We think it's necessary today to carry out actions which bring into question the "anti-racist consensus of the German people" which the state and capital falsely propagate. For us, this is more a question of clarity than of means. Or how do you all see this?

**RZ:** Like we said, a continuity of militant praxis is not only defined by actions. Conveying the differentiation of our content of analysis and goals is an important part of our politics, one which cannot be separated from a militant praxis. That's why the question of means cannot be discussed in isolation. With every practical step, the need and possibility for revolutionary change here needs to be made visible, and also the experience that resistance is possible.

So we agree with you when you say that our repertoire of ideas and means could be expanded, if conditions allow. When certain actions are justified, and when the goal of revolutionary counter-power is nearer, that is a political decision which we must make. The actual social situation needs to be judged, that means realizing that fascists and right-wingers use the same methods we do. That does not mean that methods such as firebombings are wrong. The difference lies in the perception of the action, something which is dependent on different aspects: The object which is attacked should, on its own, make it clear which political wing carried out the attack. Today it's even more important to establish a differentiation from fascist attacks. For example, we would never carry out an attack on an unoccupied tent-city, even though we'd like to see such tent-cities abolished. The use of militant method should correspond to acceptance within the movement. With every action, it should be certain that no harm will come to uninvolved persons.

Another important factor is the present strength of the left and status of society's impression of the anti-racist movement. Depending on strength relations, the degree to which the state and the media seek to take up and channel protest potential is either great or small. For example, the campaign by the state powers against hatred and violence is a desensitizing one, in which left-radical politics and militant praxis are denounced and isolated. We need to oppose this through political discussion and praxis (in our opinion, this was successfully done on

November 8, 1992, in Berlin during Weizsäcker's rally).

**Radikal:** Part of the traditional line wrote the following in "The End of Our Politics": "Today we see the consequences of the realization that the form and structure of our struggle was the expression of a particular phase of the development of social contradictions in West Germany after 1968, something which has changed since the collapse of real-existing socialism and the resulting processes of destruction, as well as German reunification and the 'New World Order' which was sketched out during the Gulf War. (...) The objective analysis which has taken place historically since 1989/90 (...) demands a fundamentally different stage in the organization of militant and revolutionary resistance. But we can't merely formulate this as a hollow attempt. In reality, we have been overrun by history."

The authors, among other things, draw certain consequences from their militant actions. We assume that you all have not drawn the same consequences? Does that mean that you all do not share the view expressed in the above quotation, or do you all draw other conclusions?

**RZ:** The paper "The End of Our Politics" made us angry, and for the first time - and it did not have this effect on us alone - it made us uncertain. This, along with the paper on Gerd Albartus and the RAF paper (August '92), was an expression of just how bad the process of exchange really was between militant and non-militant groups. We don't want to ignore the questions and problems which were raised. We recognize the necessity of a fundamental examination, like we said before. In any case, we are not at the end of our politics.

The social contradictions and violent relations have hardly changed their "character", rather they are the same as ever and they have not lessened. The erosion of the former so-called socialist states has a long history, one which began long before '89. It was always visible, even if the speed of the collapse was not predicted. At least 10 years prior to this, the Revolutionary Cells and Rote Zora gave hints in this direction in their discussion papers (the paper on the peace movement, for example). And we don't need to emphasize the fact that no proposals for a liberated society can be made with that form of socialism.

Of course, the conditions for left-radical politics have worsened since the collapse. Non-capitalist utopias are now seen as a viable alternative by fewer and fewer people here. On the contrary, many more people are now reproducing nationalist and racist ideas, and they see in these a solution to their problems. Thus, it has become more difficult for left-radical ideas to work their way into people's consciousness, or to find any acceptance whatsoever. But despite the changed conditions, we must struggle even more against this feeling of powerlessness.

But neither Germany's Super Power lust, nor the alignment of the East, nor the so-called New World Order is anything new. Anyone who has been overrun by this history has either been keeping their eyes closed or is using this history as an excuse to stop bothering with revolutionary politics. There's no possible way of organizing the resistance on an entirely different - much less a "higher" - level, rather we first need a viable resistance. Anyone who as given up on working on "the exchange between legal and illegal means of struggle" and who no longer presses for this should not be surprised if no "de-individualization" takes place.

We don't think that the crisis of the left-radical movement is the result of being overwhelmed by the collapse of the former East Bloc states. Our crisis did not begin with the "Reunification". The sorrow and mistakes of left-radical politics - a lack of organization and unified structures - have been criticized for quite some time.

Much has already been written about all of that. Everyone has been called on to do their part to improve our conditions. But we still haven't reached the point where militant forms of resistance are accepted from the

start. Whether and how leftist politics, and its strategies and forms of struggle, will develop further will be played out in future common discussions.

(from Radikal #147)

...RZ Communiqué continued from page 21

Notes:

1. Roma and Sinti are the names of people often referred to as 'gypsies'.
2. Bundeskriminalamt (BKA); the German equivalent of the FBI.
3. Rote Zora is an autonomous women's group within the Revolutionary Cells [Rote Zora is a separate structure - ed.]. They see armed actions as an inseparable part of the women's movement. Violence against women, they say, is not the exception but rather the rule in society. The struggle against personal experiences with sexist violence, they say, cannot be separated from the struggle against all forms of violence by the system.
4. The judicial 'creativity' of the German state in combatting resistance has always been amazing, and the formation of the idea of 'attack-relevant themes' is but one example of this. It gives the judicial branch an excuse to investigate all groups/individuals active around themes around which illegal actions have been carried out, even if such groups/individuals are doing perfectly legal work.
5. The 'social question' refers to the existence of the social under-class.
6. The so-called 'German Autumn' of 1977 was the height of the confrontation between the German state and armed political groups like the RAF. In fact, there was a virtual state of emergency imposed, and there were scores of detentions, house-searches, etc.
7. In Frankfurt, a new, large runway was being built, and to do this, a large forest had to be cut. A broad, mass resistance arose to resist this plan. Citizens' initiatives, church groups, autonomist and militant groups stood side-by-side at various demonstrations which included site-occupations, demonstrations, blockades, court suits, as well as armed attacks.
8. The 'front concept' was propagated by the RAF as a means of aligning all European guerrilla groups and sympathizing militant groups into one front against the ruling powers as a means of giving solidarity to the liberation movements in the Third World.

...ARA Interview continued from page 11

concert, it might be going to a symbolic demonstration where they can express their anger - most ARA demonstrations are that type of protest demonstration, not direct action type demonstrations. For example, four demonstrations against police violence which we organized with Black Action Defence Committee. There was a demonstration after gay people were attacked in Montreal, and we said that we will not allow that in our streets. There was a demonstration against Paul Fromm, a teacher who is also a neo-nazi.

These actions give space to young people to broaden their outlook. It is not just taking them to direct action. Within that process, I think people will get politicized, and honestly, some people might think 'this is going to far, this is not what I want', and they might keep some distance and come only to events where they feel they fit in.

I think that is the way we see things, because nobody has a blueprint that says what political action is, and it is during the anti-racist struggle, when people get into discussion and debate and when they exchange ideas with other organizations - those experiences lead to politicization. It is not a question of politicization first and then action - the two are complimentary to each other and are an ongoing thing.

# The Armed Strategy And The Legal Left-Wing

Current Evaluations From Autonomous Revolutionaries - An Autonomous Anti-Imperialist Connexion From Denmark

## The Armed Resistance - Object Of General Concealment, Disinformation And Speculation

After the Western secret services have gained access to the Eastern European files, they have started analyzing and working out material about the different guerrilla groups and movements, which directly or indirectly were in contact with the Eastern countries. (1) This is done to get more knowledge about the political platform, contacts, ways of organisation, logistics, etc. about the armed groups. The reason for this is firstly to get a more effective repression-machinery concerning the fight against the resistance and secondly to continue an already started effort from the rulers, with the help from the media, to establish a rewriting of the subversive struggle's history and its current political proceedings (with good help from the shrunken traditional left-wing's press). In this way the armed and militant struggle is going to be pointed out and classified as "agencies" for the interests of the Eastern European secret services. As "corrupt terrorists without political orientation, who, isolated, carried out their actions". (2)

Despite the ruler powers' false propaganda and suppression, and the parliament-orientated left-wing's tragic/comic repression and fear of contact with "illegal" militant and armed revolutionary activities, this resistance was and is nevertheless a fact, which in periods has shaken the imperialist rulers. The armed movements have for decades carried out their activities in Western Europe and have in our opinion had a constructive effect on the occurrence of numerous social struggles in the society. The existence of the armed movements disrupt the proclamation of the "social peace" between the classes. It also compromises the so-called "democratic state of affairs" in the NATO-countries, and it exposes it as being nothing but a facade, an apparently untouchable power-structure, a capitalist dictatorship. And untouchable is precisely how the system wants to appear to the population. The armed resistance directly confronts the capitalist and imperialist system with its own contradictions and attacks all kinds of integration attempts. Because of this, the radical militant resistance and the armed struggle is a taboo.

Through smear campaigns and criminalization, any real discussion about militant and armed resistance is attempted to be stopped. The existence of armed or militant resistance is in this manner being concealed or demonized by almost all the media including the media of the traditional system critical left wing.

## The Armed Struggles' Historical And Current Importance For An Anti-Capitalist Revolutionary Process In Society - The Western European Example

Since the (re)emergence of the armed, anti-imperialist, and social-revolutionary orientated resistance in Western Europe in the beginning of the 70s, the situation has severely changed in many society related areas. Exemplified by the anti-imperialist armed resistance in Germany - first of all represented by RAF and the internationalist connexion in Revolutionären Zellen - the orientation of this resistance was to break free from the frame of West German policy and to regard itself as a concrete part of a long and global front development. Its practical concept was to build up a new front in the metropolises, in "the heart of the beast" (definition from Che Guevara), closely connected to the international anti-imperialist movements. The concept of the armed struggle was to develop its own and independent mobilizing forces, as a part of the resistance until the rise of social antagonistic forces on a mass level were able to overcome an actual revolution of society. Most of the armed militant

left wing groups and movements regarded this as the most realistic possibility to develop the liberation on a global level. When the US-imperialism and its NATO-allies are being attacked from many sides at the same time, it will result in a structural political and military weakening and a phase of destabilisation, which in the end will result in a break down of the frictionless inner order which is necessary for the bourgeois democracy.

In order to obtain an interaction between the liberation struggles in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the class confrontations in the metropolises, the war should be transferred to Western Europe and attacks should be made inside the imperialist structures without compromise, starting with all the NATO institutions and the leading economic and political structures of the capital management and state apparatus.

## The Strategic Difference Between The Guerrilla And The Left-Wing Organizations

Even though the more serious parts of the Western European revolutionary left-wing, in the end of the 60s and in the beginning of the 70s, had similar strategical political estimations, there was a decisive difference in the attitude towards militant actions. The clandestine action was mainly a tactical means amongst many other forms of struggle and could thus be useful in a campaign with a limited antagonism. For the urban guerrilla, however, the militant and armed actions meant the way forward in a revolutionary direction, a practical test and demonstration of direct attacks against "untouchable" power structures and their legitimization (democratic veneer, bourgeois morals and legislation etc.)

## The Objective Limitations In Western Europe In The 70s And 80s

The battlefield of Western Europe, with the exception of Euskadi and Northern Ireland, has not until today been comparable with the historical mass-base of the guerrilla in Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Palestine, the Philippines etc. Even the similar anti-imperialist and social-revolutionary struggle experiences that MLN (the Tupamaro movement in Uruguay) had in the end of the 60s, were based on much better conditions than the conditions of the armed connexions in Western Europe are confronting. The guerrilla groups in the countries mentioned above were able to base their struggle on a large support amongst the population, even on an advanced level of the confrontation line. Even though the EEC, besides the USA and Japan (and the so-called Yen-area in Southeast Asia), is the most important bastion of the capitalist world market and therefore an important starting point for revolutionary changes - it is currently only a minor part of the population that wants a radical change of society. It is paradoxical to ascertain, that a part of the claims that people all over the world and on all historical levels have been willing to die for, to some extent, though in a deformed way, are carried out in the EEC countries and the realisation of the claims here is the basis of the catastrophic economic and social conditions and dictatorships in many poor countries.

## The Legal Left-Wing's Development Of An Opposition Loyal To The System

Despite the objective difficulties that the urban guerrilla was (and are) confronted with here in Western Europe, there is also the problem with the objective alliance partner: the legal left-wing. The predominant part of the active basis was in no way geared to the unavoidable confrontation with the state. Parts of this left-wing escaped to institutional frames. They were

distancing themselves from the armed actions and demanded the humiliating distancing-ritual from the rest of the legal left-wing. When it did not succeed they immediately demanded isolation and demarcation of those left-wing groups which refused to distance themselves from the armed struggle.

Very characteristic was (and is) the fact that some of the most vocal critics of the armed fighting groups in fact did (do) not have any knowledge about those whom they were criticizing. Usually their knowledge about the guerrilla is based on either out-dated facts or an undigested reproduction of the disinformation of the media. This is analogous to the state apparatus' international coordinated strategy of counter-revolution.

## The Critical But Allied Left-Wing

Another (though smaller) part of the legal left-wing which refused to take part in the denunciations and tried to make a critical solidarity and at the same time kept out of the state apparatus' criminalization, which as a reflex turned against any uncontrollable left-wing opposition. A part of this part of the left-wing was, because of the power balance from the mid-70s to the beginning of the 80s, and the polarisation between the resistance and the state, criminalized or pressed into dissolution. (3) Other parts of this left-wing were constantly balancing on the edge of criminalization. (4)

## Repressed But Not Destroyed

Because of the indifference or direct lack of solidarity of the revolutionary left-wing, the guerrilla in Western Europe was a very narrow fighting area to act from. Though the state apparatus in most of the Western European countries never succeeded in destroying the urban guerrilla (5), the armed resistance groups got seriously blocked in the building up of a political and armed anti-imperialist front in Europe. At times, the guerrilla was pressed back to a level of armed propaganda. It was not able to create an armed revolutionary alternative, which dialectically would have been able to dissolve the line between the legal struggle and the urban guerrilla, though in some places looks like things could have been developed in this direction. (6)

## The Guerrilla, Basic Democratic Resistance, And The Authentic Processes Of Experience And Discussion

The activities of the guerrilla have on vital points contributed to spread base-democratic orientated movements - especially in Germany and Euskadi, but also in Italy and the Netherlands - which will not accept the morality and legislation of the rulers. Firstly, this is autonomist and anti-imperialist groups, anti-racist and anti-fascist movements, feminist and lesbian connexions, radical ecological movements, squatting-movements, where they still exists, etc. This is, of course, also an interaction between the continuing existence of the guerrilla - though as a whole weakened - and the experiences of autonomous resistance movements with the repression machineries. The existence of the guerrilla and the revolutionary prisoners in the prisons of the NATO-countries is also playing a role concerning the fact that the active, militant and legal resistance does not just shut out direct and clandestine attacks on the responsible/institutions of the system. In contradiction to the rest of the almost totally integrated and passive traditional left-wing, this base-democratic resistance is not willing to transform its activities into the parliamentary frames of the bourgeoisie. Practical, collective experiences with the state, crystallized a straight political rejection of a

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# Red Army Fraction Communique

Concerning The Red Army Fraction Attack  
On The Weiterstadt Prison

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 channelled 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 channelled 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 Tauber, 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 1000 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 combatted 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 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 behaviour of the German left. What was positive about the discussions since 10.4 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 behaviour - 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 talks 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 Bögelein 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 commune 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 Rößner 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.

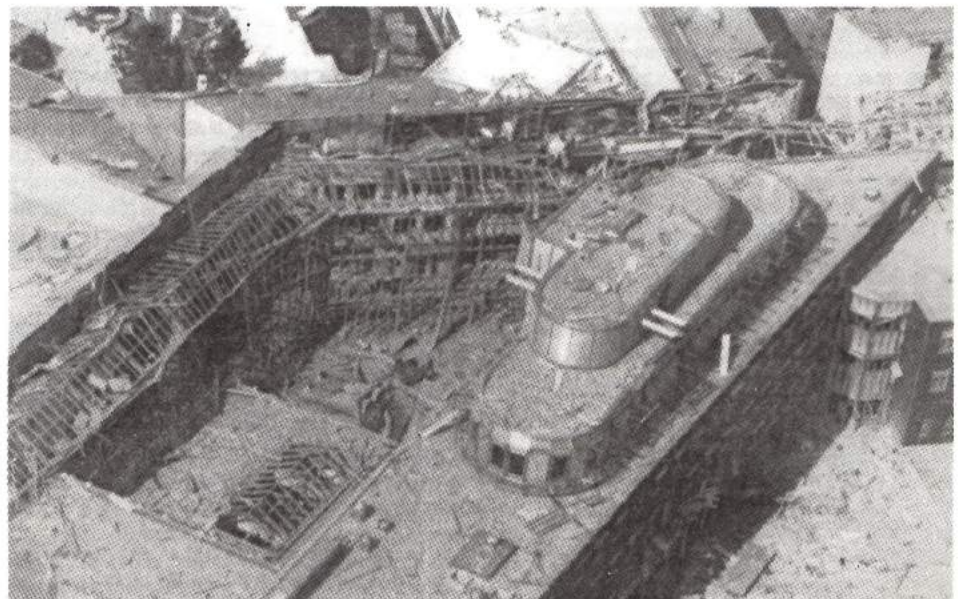
The prisoners are not going to be regrouped, be-

cause 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 Katharina 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 lim-





its 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-Plötzensee, 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 'career' from the lowest levels (ie, unadapted) to the highest (ie, conformist) living groups." (from the info-paper "Bunte Hilfe", Darmstadt)

Some women from Plötze, 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. Plötze 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-Preungshaus, announcing instead that Weiterstadt would be open in '93. What does the demand to dismantle the brutal cement display in Preungshaus have to do with Weiterstadt? It's not merely the claim that the prisoners'

conditions would be changed in Weiterstadt (where there 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 Preungshaus 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 (Preungshaus) prisoners. Their demands must be fulfilled - prisons must be torn down.

**Freedom For All Political Prisoners!**

**Free All HIV+ Prisoners!**

**Close All Isolation Units!**

**We Greet All Those Who Are Struggling In The Prisons For Their Human Rights - In Preungshaus, Santa Fu, Plötzensee, Rheinbach, Stammheim, Straubing...**

**Solidarity With The International Prisons Struggle! The Path 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!**

Commando Katharina Hammerschmidt

Red Army Fraction

30.03.1993

P.S. 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.

...continued from page 28

prospective non-confrontational transition to a basic democratic socialist society. The history and experiences of the armed guerilla struggle and the armed/militant mass rebellion does not give any illusions of a voluntary resignation. A few times in the history of the resistance, the rulers have been too weak to defend themselves. But most times they have been ready to go to fascist or authoritarian structures of ruling or to military interventions in order to save the imperialist interests in every corner of the world. Everywhere it was possible the respective repressive arrangements have changed/are changing, but the imperialist mechanism of suppression continues to be the same in its basic structures. Any resistance with a revolutionary perspective will at some moment clash with the system. This confrontation, the class war, is only possible to win with the total defeat of the rulers. Thus, it is absolutely necessary that the major practical experiences and clarification-processes from the guerilla movement become integrated as part of any serious resistance project.

#### The Current Debate About The Armed Struggle's New Orientation

The restructuring process of the economical and social fundamentals in Western and Eastern Europe needs to destroy or integrate all militant base-orientated structures and structures of armed resistance. Only the

elimination of all real opposition creates the possibility for the imperialist fusion of Europe. Under the leadership of the West German-dominated capital, the political foundation is created on a parliamentary centred "free and democratic" legitimated basis without any revolutionary opposition. This development, because of competition-related reasons, will be followed up by a common and newly-defined aggressive imperialist policy, under the leadership of an enlarged and harmonized EEC.

#### New Times, New Struggles

Today, we are in the middle of an explosive process full of contradictions. Besides diffuse, ethnic and ideological related wars as e.g. in the former Yugoslavia and in large parts of the former Soviet Union, the existence of extreme poverty and declassification in the heart of the imperialist countries will mean new cycles of class war all over Europe. Especially in the Eastern European countries, that right now are being built up as the low wage production area of the EEC, resulting in big economical and social declassification. 50% of the population no longer have jobs or housing as a result of this decline. No doubt this will result in collective forms of resistance.

#### A Weakened, But Not Destroyed, Guerrilla Starts A New Political Phase Of Struggles

The history of counter-revolution has until today

very clearly shown that the EEC imperialist rulers have not succeeded in destroying the armed and militant revolutionary struggle in Western Europe. Despite of the increased coordinated repression machinery and the constant undermining of even the most conventional rights, it will also in the future not be possible for them to eliminate the resistance. Although leading EEC politicians make a point of saying that the establishing of the inner market and the realisation of the Schengen-agreement (7) means that armed and militant groups will no more exist, and despite the RAF's current cease-fire and Brigatte Rosse's and Action Directe's stopping of armed actions, the militant radius of actions on an European level is still intact. The guerrilla in Turkey/Kurdistan, Greece, Euskadi, Northern Ireland etc., is still intact. The armed groups in Germany - RAF and the different wings of the Revolutionary Cells - are, together with autonomist, anti-fascist and anti-imperialist groups and other movements, starting together to find the ways to a new anti-capitalist offensive. This happens through the open and joint criticism of former experiences, closely connected to the discussion about perspectives for a new resistance movement.

Venceremos!

- Autonomous Revolutionaries, Denmark

continued on the back page...

# We Must Search For Something New

## Part Two Of Red Army Fraction Discussion Paper - August 1992

Since the publication of Part One of "We Must Search For Something New" in Arm The Spirit 14/15, several events have taken place which have dramatically altered the path that the Red Army Fraction has been taking since they announced a "cease-fire" in their communique of April 10, 1992.

On March 27, 1993, the Katharina Hammerschmidt Commando of the RAF bombed a newly constructed high-tech prison in Weiterstadt causing millions of dollars in damage and completely destroying it. This action did not technically break the cease-fire as they had only stopped their attacks on representatives of state and capital. On June 27, 1993, the GSG-9 ("anti-terrorist" unit) ambushed two RAF members in Bad Kleinen in eastern Germany. Wolfgang Grams was assassinated as he lay wounded on the ground by a GSG-9 officer and his comrade, Birgit Hogefeld, was captured. Due to the "ineptitude" of the security forces it was revealed that the RAF had been infiltrated by a state agent, Klaus Steinmetz, who had been part of a failed operation to capture the entire membership of the RAF. This revelation, along with the cold-blooded execution of Grams, caused a scandal which led to the resignation of Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters and chief federal prosecutor Alexander von Stahl.

The most recent event and perhaps the one that may spell the end of the RAF is the public revelation that there is a "split" between a number of RAF prisoners and the guerrilla. A letter written by RAF prisoner Brigitte Mohnhaupt on behalf of ten other RAF prisoners accuses the RAF and 4 other RAF prisoners of negotiating with the state for the release of the political prisoners in exchange for the end of armed struggle by the RAF. The RAF released a communique which criticized Mohnhaupt's letter and refuted many of its allegations (while not addressing others). At the time of this writing the RAF's future is unclear. Meanwhile, the RAF communique and Mohnhaupt's letter have been published in the 4th issue of our Info Bulletin. Write us for this and other info concerning the RAF.

Now we'd like to make clear why it is we think that we've reached our limits. In line with this, we'd like to comment on some of our past few actions, when we realized the problem wasn't that we had become emotionally estranged from many people. Guys like Herrhausen and Rohwedder were regarded by many people as the cause of suffering here at home as well as millions of deaths abroad. Many people were pleased by these actions.

From 1989, we operated under the assumption that Great Germany was developing into a major world power. And naturally, the break in the international balance of power meant global changes and sharpening in conditions for revolutionary movements. Against this background, it was essential to come to a new unity in the struggle, so as to find a new orientation together with others.

But this was only one side of the story. At the same time, we found many of the developments within the resistance itself to be very positive. Even though the Front-process had reached its limits, there had been new experiences and new mobilizations. Just to name a few: Wackersdorf in 86, the defence of the Hafenstrasse in 87, the mass-mobilization against the IMF in 88, and the hungerstrike campaign in 89. From our experiences and from these struggles, there was plenty of material to forge new developments.

We were convinced that it was possible for us - or anyone involved in revolutionary developments - to make some real advances based on these recent struggles and to advance and redevelop these experiences. Out of the discussions around the IMF actions in Berlin came the slogan "Attack the IMF!". There could have been a struggle for concrete demands like debt cancellation and an equitable distribution of resources, which would have to be pushed through against the wishes of international capital, so as to give oppressed people some room to carry out their own developments. That is just one example of how the discussions could have progressed so as to be able to decide on goals.

Out of the experiences around the Hafenstrasse and the hungerstrike campaign, we found that the concept "Struggle Together!" could and should have gone on to other things, if it had been used before, for example, to see who uses similar concepts. Who is also talking about revolution and change? Who is for and who is against revolutionary politics? Through this, we could have seen which people we could share concrete goals with and thereby acquire a variety of experiences out of a diverse unity of people.

These struggles showed us that notions like "revolutionary" versus "reformist", "single-issue movement", etc., need to be re-examined, since they all stand for a certain ordering of initiatives and ideas, and they produced certain relationships among one another and created tensions. Diversity can create strong movement when no one seeks to put down or dominate someone else. In a process wherein everyone is coming from different experiences, if a common goal for everyone can be found, then a whole wealth of initiatives and a living impulse can exist - people can learn from one another. We think that an important criteria for a new starting point here is to take these experiences and transform them into new struggles.

Despite the world-wide sharpening of conditions, and although we find ourselves standing before a mountain, those things from our past and about ourselves which we wanted to change so as to find out new things we have started on with great confidence. We view this as a period of change, out of which, as we have said, should come a revolutionary movement which has developed into a counter-power from below.

For ourselves, we saw it as important that we, in the future, see ourselves as part of a common struggle and a common discussion, in which various different initiatives all have their significance. We, as the guerrilla, wanted from the beginning to be seen as a part of this, and that our praxis should give the possibility for the development of a counter-power with some relevance. From the beginning, we didn't want the discussion, which is significant now, of choosing between armed struggle or political organizing, and we wanted some common organizing to develop from the consciousness of this, something which we need at this time; an organizing of common discussion and struggle - ranging from us in illegality to those in the neighbourhoods - and the development of coming more and more to take common steps forward.

We completely underestimated the feelings of resignation and powerlessness which large numbers of people involved in the struggle back in 1989 were feeling, and which led to a collapse of resistance structures and lots of confusion. Of course we saw that many people we knocked down by all the concentrated power, which was very real, and by the continuous cries of the "final victory of the capitalist system". So for this entire period, we held onto the hope that our actions could break through this spreading powerlessness. We also wanted to say: You see, their power can be touched; and also that it's up to us to fight back and to get to the point to develop



and push through our own proposals.

Already with our attack on Neusel, we realized that our initiatives would not be able to break through this powerlessness: We had, until that time, taken for granted that the hard posture and continued push from the state apparatus at the West European level could be hit back at. For us, it was a conscious decision and a new step to intervene in a struggle which had a concrete demand (with our attack on Neusel, we were supporting the hungerstrike of the GRAPO/PCE(r) prisoners in Spain).

We say: a new step - because in the years after 1977, our actions were never concerned with concrete demands, but rather with setting boundaries for imperialist politics and with organizing along strategic lines. Of course, we never had the illusion that this attack would answer all of the questions on the table. Nonetheless, we made the assessment that we were in a given situation, after the murder of Jose Sevillano, to be able to make room for new initiatives, after everything which had been going on in this country had been put down.

With our attack on Neusel, we aimed ourselves at the apparatus which was responsible for setting the guidelines for defeating the West European revolutionary movements. Their goal, in the wake of the collapse of state socialism, was to put an end to all forms of resistance in Western Europe. In our communique, we stated that the struggle of the Spanish prisoners for their regroupment was a turning point in the confrontation between imperialism and liberation. But the reality was, not much was attacked, and the previously-dominant feelings returned: If we weren't able to succeed during the 1989 hungerstrike here, then how can we possibly make any breakthroughs for Spanish comrades?

Others wanted to explain to us why the struggle for regroupment did not become a primary theme for them. But we never intended for people to put aside their continuing struggles and confrontations and to make the struggle of the Spanish prisoners central. What we meant by a "turning point" was that it had some meaning for everyone - no matter where they are - whether or not we could push back the ruling powers on this point. That's why we set about to raise consciousness about this and to develop initiatives from it - from our own praxis and special situation.

From this experience of the struggle to push through a concrete goal along with others came a much more careful look at our common situation and we decided to make a priority of linking up with more comrades. Those with whom we had been discussing things were, by themselves, already to find a common discussion and organization in their regions and to push past the boundaries where people begin to feel powerless and hardly do anything. We came to see this process more and more as a long-term development. Nonetheless, we still wanted to practically hinder the march of Great Germany. Even though we were pretty much alone and on a

different process, we still had the hope that other people would soon awaken from their depression. Of course, there were various initiatives in different places. But these were all unconnected and did not seek a perspective; rather, they came from a way of life: people have to do something.

In 1990, reactionary nationalist and racist mobilizations became more intense and led to many beaten refugees lying dead in the streets. 1990, the year of Great Germany's big party (and even though we have nothing against soccer, Germany's victory in the World Cup led to celebrations of "Germany, a people united in victory").

On October 3 came the unity fest and a new day for celebrations. In the communique after the attack on Rohwedder, the head of the Treuhand, we stated: "We see our action as an attack against one of the architects of the new Great Germany as an attack which hit this reactionary development at its roots. It's obvious, as German history through the Third Reich has shown, that poverty, social decline, and massive unemployment do not, by themselves, lead to a mobilization for human causes against the rulers of the State."

We consciously planned that action against one of those responsible, not only at the political level for the development of Great Germany, but also someone who was directly responsible for orienting all of life's necessities to capitalist criteria and for the destruction of the structures of life and existence for the people of the former-DDR. We did not have the sort of ties to people there that many West German intellectuals had, who said, "They wanted capitalism, so it's their own fault, they got what they wanted." Although it did greatly affect us, as people who have been struggling here for years against this system, just how people suddenly embraced this system with open arms. But that's not the point. Most of them didn't realize what they were getting into. Intellectuals who are used to living with computers and CD players can hardly be outraged at the fact that people were seeking consumerism.

We saw it as a task for the revolutionary left in Germany to hinder this march which was rolling over people. Since we, here, knew what it meant, and the people there were beginning to get their first experiences of life under this system.

For us, the discussions of the new situation didn't just have to do with the collapse of the state socialist system, but rather that Germany had become an entirely different country. There were now 18 million extra people, with histories and experiences that were strange to us. We nonetheless tried to reach the people there with our action, but we oriented ourselves from our position, rather than from the developed relationship to the struggles or demands there. Still, the Monday Demonstrations continued for some time, something which we found good.

The attack on Rohwedder was our penultimate action. It was then that we realized that the process which is so necessary here could not be brought about at this time through our actions, even if they targeted those responsible for the world-wide suffering of millions of people. But many people in the former-DDR were pleased with our action. But it didn't expand us in any way, and it doesn't have the perspective of revolutionary politics if next to nothing results from it.

Concretely, we confronted those people in the former-DDR, who were organizing for a different form of change than that being pressed upon them by the West German state and capital, with a level of struggle which they did not know from their experience. For them, it's as if we pushed our way into their experience from the outside.

In different groups in West Germany, the action has the effect of propping up an old relationship which we no longer wanted: We noticed after the action that various people wanted to do something against the Treuhand; for example, some wanted to blockade a Treuhand firm and

demand the regroupment of the prisoners. But these comrades never came upon the idea of beginning a discussion with people who are concretely affected by Treuhand policies and to thereby develop concrete demands. They didn't attempt to try and find any common ground or a foundation to build further common actions upon. But we would have liked to have seen this happen. One goal of the action was to launch a political discussion to arrive at an understanding with people from the former-DDR.

This contradiction made it clear to us that a lot is lacking, even in the understanding between us and those who identify with us, because they interpreted our action based on an old frame of mind and wanted, above all, to attack the same target. They had entirely different criteria than those which we had developed over the past few years. That is only one example which made it clear to us later on that we needed a break and deep-reaching discussion and communication.

As for our action against the U.S. Embassy during the Gulf War: some people criticized our action as merely being symbolic. This was an action which we decided upon in a very short period of time. We wanted to renew the ties with all those people around the world who were struggling against this destructive war. We felt it was important to aim at those politically responsible for this genocide. Of course we realized that this action would not materially affect the war in any way. By means of the Gulf War, imperialism, in the era after the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe, showed in a bloody manner just the "One World" of capital was to mean for people: the determination to militarily suppress any government or people that does not apply itself to the rules of the "New World Order".

We had to decide on things based on our specific situation: Either do nothing at all - something we couldn't even imagine - or organize an action relatively quickly. Our aim with the action was to strengthen the political relationship against imperialism. Of course just a single action, and even the broader mobilization, was not in any way going to stop this genocide. But everyone surely knows that Ruche and Kinkel would have been eager to send German air force units around the globe if this mobilization had not taken place.

Even though the German state took great steps towards this and kept on with this development - it is a problem of these leftists, many intellectuals and many who call themselves revolutionary, that so little remains after such a mobilization, very little is put forward and nothing is linked to it and no new strengths arise. Even so, leftist intellectuals aren't so dumb as to start big discussions as to whether it's reprehensible when a movement against the war is partially driven by the fact that people have fear that war could also get waged from this country thus making them directly involved. We don't think this is bad, because from such a fear can come a deep solidarity with those people against whom the war is being waged, rather than from a purely intellectual view which knows everything and is above human feelings and from which nothing comes.

For us, the broad mobilization against the Gulf War meant something entirely different. We were surprised and astonished that after two years of German parties and jubilees, a broad movement against imperialist war could arise. It was a sign to the ruling powers that hundreds of thousands of people were not willing to accept

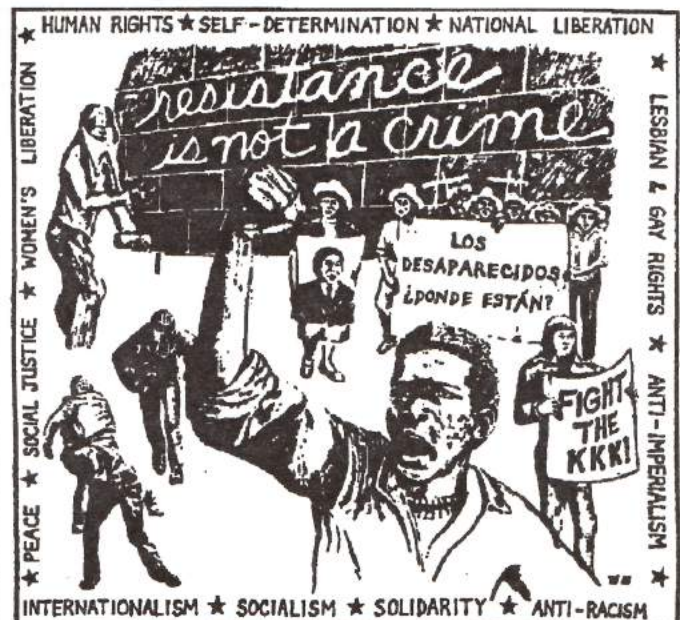
future German military intervention policies. We also think it's important not to lose sight of this fact: on the other side, there was a reactionary development and the fascists grew stronger.

Various things became clear to us from the reactions to the embassy action. Of course there were reactions from people who, we could tell, had understood us; these were often people who were doing as much as they could against the war. But then there others that said we should have acted against Germany's role in the war. To act against the USA, they said, was a false orientation - a counter-action, even. The action, they said, was not effective, so it couldn't have come from us - it must have been carried out by the state. It was impossible that the RAF could have oriented themselves towards people carrying out blockades against the war or conscientious objectors, instead of exclusively revolutionaries and anti-imperialists. And the action, some said, endangered those people blockading the US embassy (even though we made it quite clear in the communique that we made sure that the action ruled out all chance of danger).

The relative ease with which some people get behind our actions and approve of them, without even "wasting" any thought on how they themselves can act on what they demand from us, especially struck us. For example, those people who stated that we should have focused more on Germany's role in the war - we never heard of any initiatives from them in this area.

But what we want to say doesn't only concern those people who don't do anything, but nevertheless criticize the initiatives of others. Many people who are close to us were disappointed by this action, because they had hoped for something more effective. This was a point that was becoming clearer to us, namely that we had become a sort of institution. We agree with what Lutz Tauber said in his letter to "Konkret" in August: The RAF has become a projection surface. With our action against the embassy, we disappointed many people who had hoped that someone would do something effective.

At the end of 1989, when we entered a new phase, our starting-point was that all those who were to come to the decision to struggle with us should be prepared to get involved in a situation where many open questions remain. Continuity for the RAF could no longer mean an orientation to years-old politics, but rather to speak to changing global conditions and changes in society and to develop something new based on the boundaries which our politics from the last few years had reached. And even though we are still at a boundary today, during the three years when we carried out a parallel process of re-orientation and intervention, for us and for those with us,



we have had significant experiences which now constitute our foundation.

We aren't bothered by the opinion which one comrade expressed in "Interim" when he/she stated that our actions have achieved nothing. They have, of course, set boundaries to the state's march, and they have also led to a situation where it's possible to force the state into a discussion concerning freedom for political prisoners. But the actions have not achieved everything which we find necessary for the general situation. They stand alongside the processes underway in the society. Given the current situation, actions from us would bring a level of confrontation which would hinder rather than help a fundamental common search for new orientations.

It's also important that this relationship, which we wrote of after the embassy action, and which could also be used to describe any number of other confrontations, could not be broken through. By the relationship we mean the fact that many comrades delegate to us the responsibility to struggle at a certain point in the confrontation, since we are prepared to, or, as we recently heard again, because we can show the "concrete attackable goals for the future". They fail to see much of their own responsibility, and also that this has to be a common process. It is this very relationship which some prisoners have written about recently: A false division of labour which has developed over the past few years, and a false relationship, which many have developed with regards to us and which we also helped create, that there's always a guerrilla and those who find the actions either good or bad.

We know that there are people in different areas who, from their own responsibilities, have built things up. But there are few people who, along with us, are asking the question of how we can build a counter-power from below and who want to start on this process along with us.

For us, it wasn't easy to come to the decision that we needed to take a step which would entail us letting go of some things. Although over the last few years we worked on the assumption that with every action we had some answer to offer for the situation, this left us ever more on our own, so with this step we decided to embark on a very new direction. Some of our imprisoned comrades put it this way: The RAF has also abandoned its responsibility to the left. For us, that means a trust and admission to all those who we are now reaching out to, to learn from their strengths and weaknesses so as to derive some use for the future. And to all those who arisen in the new conditions over the last few years, and to those who have started new things. A trust that our step would be seen as part of a necessary process of searching for new foundations to expand the struggle. We need a movement that is in a position to come to a common decision, based on shared foundations and understandings, concerning short-term and long-term goals and to decide how the struggle should proceed.

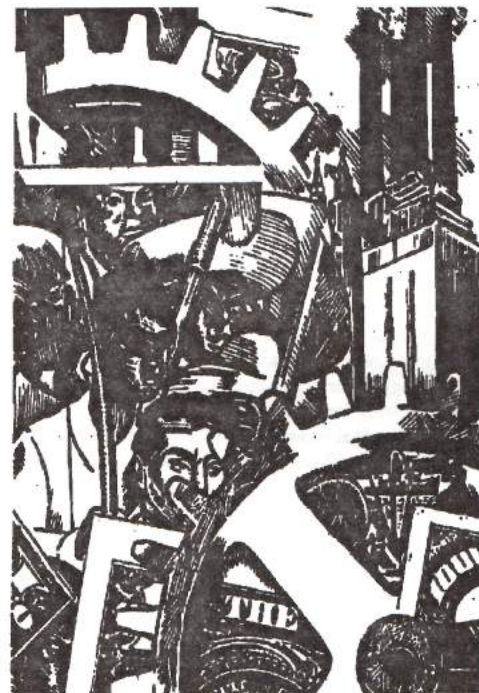
Our step of April 10 is the most decisive step we have taken in the last three years in the process which we seek to develop at this time. On April 10, we stated: We are now making room for this process. This has meaning in two directions. Because we have lessened the level of confrontation with the state from our side, the determination of the level of confrontation is no longer to be attributed to us alone. It is to be attributed to all those who seek to determine how a human existence can be achieved both here and world-wide. We also made room for fresh air for thought, for us and for everyone seeking to develop a new orientation, and to no longer repeat old things without reflection and to leave all questions and discussions unanswered.

"...We need to struggle anew for the social concerns of people. This is not a question of power. From there, there can be no reversal in society. Only from their relationship to our self-organization can it be determined whether that which the RAF has sought after has any

relevance: To establish a level of confrontation outside of war and to again become part of the social process of discovery. If, on the other hand, things remain as they always have been, then these leftists will either have to find a way around this powerlessness or attack the exploitative relationship..." (Karl-Heinz Dellwo)

When we said on 10.4 that the Kinkel-proposal "has shown that there are fractions in the State apparatus that don't believe that the social contradictions and resistance can be kept under control with police/military means alone", we didn't intend to mistake a truism for a new development. Many people misunderstood us and said: It has always been the case that the State, alongside its police and military answers, has sought to integrate contradictions and to take things on in this manner. And they are right to say this.

Of course we never attributed human motives to either Kinkel or to the "Group for the Coordinated Fight Against Terrorism". We see things just as the prisoners in Celle, who said the following in "Konkret": "...as for the



prisoners, there are fractions in the apparatus who we don't over-estimate, because they... have the same goal." But Kinkel's utterances are - as ever - a political expression of this contradiction which has been around for a while. So it's very worthy of note that this is an apparatus which is capable of great inertia: the state security complex with its roots in fascism, and a relative degree of independence, and which, along with the media, has built up an image of self-legitimation. Even though it's been evident for some time now that they would not be able to break either the RAF or its prisoners, they have pressed on for years..." (towards the military defeat both outside and on the inside through torture).

As far as this was unclear in our text, we need to clear things up. Nonetheless, we think that many other people besides ourselves must be conscious of the fact that in the whole situation there is a certain politically explosive force that we can utilize to our side's benefit. It won't get us anywhere to communicate at the same time the fact that the state's goals do not mesh with our own. It's extremely important to see that the state, at a certain point in the confrontation, understood that it had to do something which it had been trying for years to achieve through destruction. In the confrontation between the prisoners of the guerrilla/resistance and the state, the state never opted for integration, because just as with the confrontation with the guerrilla, antagonism has been the

point of reference.

Today, everyone who has been involved in the struggle against torture and for the regroupment and lives of the political prisoners, can self-consciously approach this situation knowing that it is the result of this years-long process. This was important to us and led us to the question of how we could use this situation to benefit our side.

While the state's goal is to eliminate the politics of the RAF, at the moment one of our fundamental goals is to push back the state from its obliteration mind-set which it has in regard to all those struggling for a self-determined life, who won't be pressed down by the power of money, and those who formulate, change, and press through their own interests against the profit motives of capital. It all depends on whether the possibility offered to our side in this situation is taken advantage of by many people or not. Of course there's no automatic connection between the retreat of this state from its destructive position with regards to the political prisoners and to its retreating from its obliteration mind-set with regards to the fundamental opposition.

As has become increasingly clear in the last few weeks, the state wants to protract and depoliticize this process, and the question to all those who want freedom for the political prisoners and who want to struggle from below for developments here in Germany is not to let go of this.

In the struggle for the freedom of the political prisoners, the political confrontation which the state has sought to break with states of emergency and torture over the last 22 years must remain central. And the fact must remain central in this confrontation that there are prisoners from the guerrilla and the resistance for the following reason: because the German state never relaxed its posture of annihilation against the revolutionary resistance from the days of fascism. Armed struggle has always been necessary to get past this posture of annihilation - when nothing else is allowed to live outside of the reality dictated by capital, then the existence and possibility of development of a revolutionary resistance must be pushed through. That is the reason why comrades have joined and developed the guerrilla for the past 22 years. And why other comrades have withdrawn from the guerrilla.

Into this comes the explosive force which the situation since 10.4 has brought about for the state and for our side. We made certain statements on 10.4:

1. That we see it as a priority that there be room for political discussion and the organizing of a counter-power from below, and
2. That we have no interest in an escalation of the confrontation with the state, because an action from us today, which would heighten the confrontation, would not advance the political process for our side.

For us, this was an offensive step, because we entered this phase conscious of the fact that the entire situation is presently at a break-point, and nothing can remain the same as it was before - not even for us, the RAF. Rather, we are struggling within this process in Germany to make room for the development of a counter-power from below, and for the organization of a fundamental opposition and base-movements, and if the state should not retreat, then the necessary and historically logical answer would be the resumption of armed struggle, but not simply as our own decision as the RAF to resume actions, but rather as the decision of many people presently involved in the process. When many people consciously enter the discussions and ask the question, and not just to us, of what the answer must be should the state not relax its destructive stance, then we will truly have a strong political weapon that we can take in hand against the state.

It doesn't get us anywhere to say: Look, they are beating down anti-fascists in Mannheim who were demanding protection for refugees from fascist attacks; or, Look, in Munich they sought to disrupt discussion meetings for the G-7 counter-congress. We have seen those things, and many others besides. We also see that they are bringing new charges against Christian Klar, Ingrid Jakobsmeier, Sieglinde Hoffman, and Rolf-Clemens Wagner on the basis of crown-witnesses' statements, thus they are clearly still seeking destruction - just as they heightened some prisoners' isolation conditions after 10.4. They are protracting the process of winning freedom for the prisoners, since they have not yet released Bernd Roessner. And they continue to exert pressure on the prisoners and on us, thus denying themselves and history. If the state continues on in this way, then it must bear the responsibility for if the level of confrontation is against heightened.

On the other side, there's the question of what our side has been doing. A total of 2000 people went to the demo in Bonn demanding freedom for political prisoners. There have been discussion papers criticizing the notion that conditions for the entire fundamental opposition can be improved by winning freedom for the political prisoners. In actual fact, freedom for the prisoners and improved conditions can only be achieved if people from various struggles take part in these initiatives.

After the police attacks in Munich, it could be heard on the TV that: This relationship between the police and the resistance is the reason that groups like the RAF exist in Germany. It would bring more political sharpness into open discussions if many comrades would look at why this state, which is on its way to becoming a super-power, acts this way in response to the resistance. If things stay as they are now, it will be impossible to ask how we push the state to retreat. Thus the resistance will remain trapped in the logic of the ruling powers, since we won't have any goals which can be struggle after outside of this logic. Of course we can understand that many comrades have this stance, since it's not unknown to us, but we criticize it because it doesn't lead to anything and it doesn't pose the question of what we can actually achieve.

Another position which we can only criticize came up in the interview which Thomas Ebermann and Hermann Gremliza did with the prisoners in Celle, namely advising both the prisoners and us to speak of defeat and hopelessness in order that the prisoners might have a chance of getting out. This just reduces the struggle for the prisoners' freedom to a matter of a deal between the state on the one hand and the RAF on the other.

Quite the contrary: We think that it's of great importance that both the demand for freedom for the prisoners as well as the broader political dimension that is coupled with our question of whether or not the state will retreat, and that this question not just be asked in the scene ghettos" (or, for that matter, only in state security offices), but rather that a broad social mobilization for their freedom be brought about. It must be made clear to the government, to the business leaders, and to all fractions of the state apparatus that the consequences for this state, if it sticks to its destructive posture, will be the most serious it has faced, had we not taken the step we took in our history on 10.4.

We have stated that we can not be held responsible if the state seeks to smash the process that we have initiated. We don't think that it's always the right answer for us to escalate a situation with armed actions every time the state intervenes heavily against people and attempts to stop certain processes. Our orientation today, first and foremost, is to develop a social process in which the counter-power from below is organized which can set boundaries to the state's march and force it back.

If it appears that the state will not allow any space for such a thing to be organized, since, for example, it has already crushed previously struggled-after spaces, then it

will be necessary to fight back against this state. Our decision to intervene at a certain point would be made as a result of the discussions in this process. It would depend upon whether it would be useful or necessary for this process. We would, then, use an armed intervention as a moment of forcing the state into retreat and not as a broader strategy. So we wouldn't just be going back to our old ways. This escalation is not in our interest. But the state needs to know that if it allows for no other means, then it is responsible for the means we have available from our experience and determination. They can't erase our experiences from 22 years of armed struggle.

What the ruling powers today call the triumph of capitalism has, in actual fact, become a global crisis. The linking of the southern hemisphere to the global market has brought explosive debts to the peoples of the Three Continents, the exploitation of natural resources, mass poverty, and millions facing starvation. After imperialism has sought for centuries to prevent and destroy the self-development of the Three Continents and to bleed the people dry, now entire populations are deemed worthless by the world market. Since 1991, more than 50,000 Somalis have died of hunger, "and a further 1.5 million Somalis have practically been sentenced to die of hunger" (U.N.); then there are the street children being murdered in Brazil; then there are the millions of homeless people, many of whom are even forced out of slums; and today, diseases associated with poverty, such as cholera, are spreading once more. Against this background, corporations such as Volkswagen respond to a strike by simply firing 15,000 employees, as recently happened in Mexico.

Under the dictates of imperialism, entire populations have little other choice but to lay down and die. Now the people of Eastern Europe are also faced with this "perspective". This crisis also long-ago took root in the primary states. The number of people in the metropolises who are no longer needed by capitalism has never been so explosively high, and the gap between rich and poor has never been so wide. Today we can see a "Third World in the First World".

The seeming triumph of the capitalist market system and the global rule of money is irreversibly coupled with its all-encompassing crisis of unprecedented extent. It is impossible to solve the contradiction between competing economies, the logic of the capitalist system, global poverty, and the world-wide destruction of the environment. The destruction of food supplies and price stabilization in the EC while at the same time millions of people in the South go hungry and living conditions worsen in Eastern Europe - this situation speaks for itself. Even if it wanted to, the capitalist system could not solve these problems - solutions are only possible outside the framework of capitalist logic.

Of course the proposal that the people in the South and the East just lie down and die won't be realized, because the starving and marginalized peoples won't abide by the laws of global market strategies which have written their death sentences. All around the world, struggles of oppressed and dispossessed are being waged to win back their own self-determination in life. The global movement of refugees, which capital can scarcely control, is increasingly directing itself towards the metropolises.

Even if could say today that the general development of capitalism could even lead to collapse of its primary states, this still would not imply any progress for humanity. The ruling powers are not in a position to maintain the old functioning of the imperialist system, whereby the peaceful metropolises lay at a great distance from the war and plundering in the Three Continents. This is particularly evident by the inability to integrate whole populations, something especially evident in the USA, but also in the former-DDR, France, and Britain. The rebellions in the city ghettos in Los Angeles, Paris, and various cities throughout Britain are the first signs of

what could become a reality tomorrow in the metropolises. Even here, we haven't seen so many strikes, demonstrations, and work-site occupations in opposition to the roll-back of previously fought-for social rights and gains as we have in the past two years (rapidly increasing rents in the former-DDR, plant closures, welfare cuts, the public transport strike, etc.). But these struggles are only one side of the story. The explosion of violence and person-to-person brutality and the self-collapse of the society is the other.

The war has come home to Europe. In Yugoslavia, the struggle over the division of resources and the chance to join up with the capitalist world market has escalated into a bloody nationalist war. The human suffering is beyond measure. A solution within the categories of the existing system is not possible. The policies of neither the EC nor NATO no longer have the ability to cope with such a crisis. For the ruling powers, the main question is to get things in control so that a dynamic does not develop which takes things out of their hands. The overriding interest of the German state is to have justification for the use of its military forces, and to get legitimation here at home for such intervention, as well to start bringing about a concrete agreement on an international division of labour. They are using the suffering of the Yugoslavian people to further develop and solidify what was begun during the Gulf War. What's at issue is the "U.N.'s monopoly on violence" (Engholm), since the U.N. is controlled by the rich capitalist nations.

In Germany, we are confronted with a situation in which technological advances put ever more people out of work and which makes conditions unbearable for those still needed to work. While the permanent rise in productivity guarantees high profit rates for the elite, pressure on workers has increased. They are not only slaves to people and computers. There is also an increased pressure towards performance and flexibility - that means the willingness to subordinate the rest of one's life to functioning well at one's job - and in the former-DDR, it has led to women being forced to become sterilized in order to take on work.

There is also the pressure to no longer get sick, so that one doesn't get booted out. Thus many people have become worn out and ill. Here, the reaches of the service sectors, which at best have little to do with peoples' necessities of life, are forever being expanded. This and the useless increase in consumer production serve the interests of profit while destroying the ecological basis of life as well as persons themselves.

Although Germany is one of the wealthiest nations in the world, even here there is an increasing demand for housing, rents eat up an ever-higher portion of one's pay, and there are about one million homeless people. Evermore people depend on welfare, and even the state has admitted the problem of poverty among the elderly. Even in the metropolises, ever-fewer people are able to join the "crazy competition of people amongst themselves" - this is how Fidel Castro described consumerism. In evermore walks of life, the contradictions between people and the logic dictated by profit motives are breaking into view.

Particularly in the former-DDR, living conditions have become increasingly sharpened. "We doubt that there has ever been a time, except for during and just after the war, when so many people in such a short period of time have been thrust into distress, helplessness, and need."; the author of this in the former-DDR rated 5000 letters. Three were positive. One survey there showed that 60 percent of the population of the former-DDR believed that socialism provided for fundamental social justice. The vast majority, if given the option, would opt for a different type of social development which is neither the DDR-system nor capitalism. One youth said in a TV interview: "The people in the DDR were less preoccupied by the ideology of the SED and the Stasi than the people in the West are by money."

In total, the number of people who expect the state to find a solution for the problems has fallen dramatically. But the worsening of the contradictions does not automatically lead to solidarity and organizing, but rather alienation, loneliness, and competition - the collapse of the social relations between people - become the norm in the society which the system has inflicted. Capitalism has replaced social worth with the search for profit and money. Everything should be marketable, every problem should be solved with money, and every need should be able to be fulfilled by some product. That is the ideology of capitalism and is the foundation for the continued existence of this system. Its relationship to those who break out of this and want to organize for a different reality is clear: beat down, lock up, and eradicate.

Today, when so many people have fears about their existence, the collapse of the social relations in society has taken on a new dimension: the explosion of self-destruction and person-on-person violence. Out of mangled hopes and the lack of any proposal of how to bring about positive change, many people are fleeing to alcohol and drugs, and even the suicide rate is increasing. The frustration, fear, and aggression gets directed back at the people themselves or against others who are even lower on the social hierarchy. Thus the Nazis are against those of another skin colour, nationality, against gays and lesbians, and there is an increase in violence against women, children, and elderly persons. The media's hate-campaign against refugees and the beating down of anti-fascists in the streets shows clearly that it's in the interest of state and capital to channel the rising dissatisfaction into a racist and reactionary mobilization. Against this, the possibility to organize relationships of solidarity and self-determined associations from below - that is, from the day-to-day reality of peoples' lives - to develop and push through worthwhile and just solutions, is barely visible.

Nonetheless, we today can assume that the struggles of the past 25 years, which ever-more people have taken up and which were organized in leftist circles, have left definite traces in society's conscience. For example, the unwillingness to accept technology which threatens both people and nature, such as gene technology and atomic energy, the support given to squatting movements in various cities, support for people who refuse to do military service, the broad mobilization against the IMF in 1988, the hundreds of thousands of people who demonstrated against the Gulf War, or the 25,000 people at the demo against the G-7. These traces and the fact that we have been able to carry out attacks against the state for 22 years stands in direct opposition to all attempts by the state to exclude all who struggle for another way of life, and these are foundations on which to build something new.

We are concerned with a process in which its possible to build a genuine counter-power. The global situation, both in its development in the German state and in the society, is seeking for a strength to halt the process of self-destruction and to push through worthwhile solutions. It's about a social process that encompasses different walks of life and that struggles after spaces in which to nurture "the new" - searching for radical solutions for life and common concrete questions - and which exists as an alternative to the system. This can only be a process which involves different forms of organizing the various splintered forces are searching in different places for a way to push through a humane way of life and which makes possible cooperation and which assumes a position of power in relation to the ruling powers. Solutions which orient themselves towards people and nature, and not to profit, won't be offered by the ruling powers. This is a process in which the ruling powers are pushed back and forced to allow solutions from below.

Today, it's often the case that people who, at a certain point, find their situation in life unbearable, collide with the reality that it's the entire organization of the

capitalist system which makes their own situation unbearable. For example, when people oppose the increase in traffic, like on the Stresemannstraße in Hamburg, they realize that capitalist organization, with its focus on profit, leave no space left over for them. Then the question is at hand, whose interests does an immense increase in transportation traffic serve? The interests of capital stand in opposition to the interests of people who seek an environment where children aren't threatened by huge trucks outside their front door. And the foolishness of the increase in consumer production requires the foolishness of an increase in transport traffic.

Another example: Recently there was a racist mobilization against refugees in Mannheim, before which the situation was such that in the part of the city where the refugees were coming and being attacked, youths had earlier demanded a space be allotted to them, but the city refused. This building was to be used to house the refugees. If there had been earlier discussions in the neighbourhood, then the youths could have organized with antifas in the region to help protect the refugees, then they would have had support and something in common, and then the arrival of the refugees could have started something new. Because in those areas where the refugees came, there could quickly have arisen a discussion of why they had to flee here and why they could no longer live in their country; then, the same system that is responsible for world-wide suffering also doesn't allow youths here space to live. Then there could have been a discussion of how to struggle together for a space to live.

Of course we think that organizing for the protection of refugees and for the beating back of fascists is absolutely necessary. But this example also shows that the process we need now can't take place within the safe-have of the "scene ghettos".

The collapse of social relations is one fundamental cause of the power and longevity of the capitalist system. A counter-power from below can only come about if there are alternatives to the ruling norms in this society under this system. That means: To organize an opposition to the collapse of social relations and the all-against-all alienation and to struggle to create space in which there is real solidarity and from which springs the responsibility to take social developments in hand - we call this a process of winning over the society. From this will come the ability to win people over, for the struggle for social relations among people must provide an alternative to the alienation of the system, the despair of self-destruction, and the fascists. This will be a foundation for an internationalist consciousness, a foundation on which international solidarity can be fostered.

In these processes, the question of international solidarity comes up immediately at the start, because the population here is comprised of people of various different nationalities. The one without the other, the development of worthwhile solutions without the development of ties of solidarity amongst one another - this is inconceivable. The priority of the counter-power from below and of the revolutionary development is above all a consciousness that makes it possible for ever-more people to come into common action.

In this process which is now so necessary, it will be shown whether Great Germany can develop a counter-power from below in a new international process of change, or if nothing here will happen except that the collapse will progress. Thus, the situation escalates: It will go in one or the other direction, nothing will stay as it is now. The crisis of capital and the crisis of the proletariat brought fascism to power in the past. It's important to see the dangers in the present sharpened situation. But it's just as important to understand the possibilities in this situation. The shrinking of thought to the general and specific crisis of many leftists has led to stagnation in the past few years and pushed each person's responsibility to the background. For many, what was said over the past few years came to pass, for others, who

sought change via various initiatives, there is the position of "that nothing can make change now" - even though most of them are doing poorly - and withdrawal to the position of observer.

When we talk of the left's responsibility, we mean everyone's responsibility and initiative in this process. There is no program, no concept, not from us or from anyone else. This is not possible. This is a process of self-discovery and new foundations and discussions. The discussion that we now seek is about finding new thoughts for the process of change.

We want to find and struggle together for a social alternative rather than allow the reactionary side of this society to strengthen itself once more. Reactionary and racist mobilizations, in which peoples' social element is killed, are a means for the German state - in the competitive struggle of international capital for control of the world - to advance its destructive politics against people and to further escalate it. It is the precursor to the world-wide deployment of German troops, which they are now heading towards. It is our responsibility, and the responsibility of all leftists in this country, to build up a counter-power which is in a position to prevent this.

The path to liberation is a part of the process of winning over society, which is a part of the new international struggle for change.

## Red Army Fraction

August 1992

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### Notes:

1. Were supported by or had diplomatic contact with these countries, or their respective Communist parties, that are loyal to the state, gave information to the secret services of Eastern Europe, for instance by informers.

2. For us as autonomists it is important to communicate authentic material from the armed and clandestine left-wing groups, in order to contribute to the creation of an authentic history and experience.

3. *Potere Operaia*, *Lotta Continua*, *Autonomia Operaia* in Italy, *Proletarische Linke*, *Revolutionäre Kampf*, *Iranian and Palestinian connexions* in Germany, *Rote Jugend* in the Netherlands, *Gauche Proletariene* in France...

4. E.g., the many autonomous connexions such as the *Kommunistischen Bund* in West Germany, *Herri Batasuna* in Euskadi, *Sinn Féin* in Northern Ireland, etc.

5. With the exception of Portugal: The Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP), Belgium: the Fighting Communist Cells (*Cellules Communistes Combatantes* - CCC), and to some extent France: *Action Directe* and Italy: the different fractions of the Red Brigades etc.

6. E.g., in Italy, during the years '77 to '80. The Red Brigades, which was the biggest guerrilla organization among more than 100 armed groups in Italy, showed itself as a rudimentary tail of the creation of a rising revolutionary revolt strongly rooted in the population. This was expressed in a broad and multitudinous spectrum of methods of action and with a great ability to mobilize, and the resistance was able to set the agenda for the politically unstable Italian society.

7. A common refugee- and asylum-policy for all the EEC countries, with the purpose of selecting refugees and immigrants according to the needs of the market and profitability.