

"Statement from Helmut Pohl in Stammheim"²²

Helmut Pohl - To start with those two there in green should go away. I already noticed this morning that those two can read my notes. As well, I can't talk if I'm wedged into my chair.²³

(The guards are placed between Pohl and Prinzing.)

Of course, make a wall. I can see I'm not going to get the opportunity that Klaus Jünschke had yesterday²⁴.

I will start with what I've directly participated in since I've been in the group, which was around the beginning of 1971. I want to talk about this period because it is essential to understanding the structure of the RAF. The entire dimension which one develops in the struggle against the system, against the imperialist State, this could not have been developed if our politics, the struggle for liberation, had not been realized from the beginning of the organization itself, that is to say, within the organization. It is on this basis that the guerilla can be effective. It will not be necessary to return to this point. That is how it grows; everyone approaches it in this way; everyone is put in contact with their practice in a way that allows them to clarify it and begin to struggle. The goal is that everyone struggle, and that can't be achieved by directives and orders or whatever other bullshit Müller testified to.

On the contrary, what was clear was the impulse, the resolve, quite simply, the search for something new, precisely in opposition to this shit here. That was what made it attractive and created the base of support. This existed from the beginning, and there is no way it could have been otherwise.

That is why the entire attempt here to falsely attribute, on the basis of the statements fabricated by Müller, a hierarchical structure to the RAF, a police structure, is quite simply absurd. But that is unimportant. What is going on is that this fabrication is the central element of the psychological war that has been waged against us for six years. As a countermeasure, as a means of warfare, with the goal of putting a picture of the structures in people's minds; structures that they know, that they live in day after day and that they hate. And Müller is, in reality, only an instrument of this counterstrategy carried out against us, someone bought and force fed by State Security, with the goal of giving his stupid projections a vague air of authenticity.

That it is war, and the reasons it is carried out as such, exposes the illegitimacy of this State and the fact that it can only obtain loyalty by force...

²² Helmut Pohl - early RAF member and political prisoner.

²³ Reference to two prison guards.

²⁴ Klaus Jünschke - a RAF prisoner. He attacked the judge, Theodor Prinzing, on the day before Helmut Pohl's testimony.

(Prinzing interrupts.)

...because it cannot continue to obtain this loyalty except by repression; for example, the 71-72 dragnet, the torture is a clear example, the centrally organized campaign of lies against us in the media, with the demagogic appeals of the politicians, and, finally, the open use of police terror after the poll in the summer of 71 indicated that there was massive support in the country for the RAF's struggle, that it was understood despite the various attempts at anticommunist brainwashing, because the people have discovered and recognized what they want.

This is what the psychological war is directed against, with its campaigns of disorientation and its psychological actions, such as the Stuttgart bomb threat²⁵. It is an attempt to destroy the guerrilla's moral integrity and to neutralize the effect of its politics and orientation, to erase the example of the revolutionary offensive now before it has time to take root in the minds of people as a source of hope.

It is enough to simply understand where we are: the FRG, the sub-center, the second most powerful imperialist State, where repression is total, where there are structures of manipulation and repression which were previously unknown here, even in the times of Nazi fascism.

And, on the other hand, to fight against that, a structure is necessary that excludes all of that, because nothing less will do.

It is necessary to clarify what that means for each individual at the point in their existence when they begin to struggle, begin to organize in the guerrilla, that for all who do this, it means, above all, struggling against all forms of domination, force and hierarchy.

What is needed, in the way of will and effort, to undertake the struggle - to organize and, above all, to assure its continuity - rules out all of that bullshit, pure and simple. Or, to put it another way, we couldn't carry out the struggle for liberation, for freedom, if we weren't free, if we were operating within a structure that wasn't free. That is precisely what I learned from the beginning of my involvement in this group, before being arrested in 71 for the first time.

Specifically, in 1971 there was a process of collective discussion in illegality, within which the discussion regarding strategy, developing the line, involved everyone. It was open. Open within the group and open towards the outside. There was a very broad discussion with other groups, including legal groups, and with individuals from legal anti-imperialist organizations. And, of course, the discussion also addressed the reaction that the activity of the RAF was receiving. That is to say, how our politics, our actions, were assessed and understood by these groups. Openness is, in any event, an important

²⁵ False communiqués were issued in the name of the RAF. They alleged a campaign of random bombings for June 2nd, 1972. These communiqués had their source in the security police counterinsurgency campaign.

element of the structure, and I want again to add, openness to what others say and openness to every other person.

In any case, what Müller said, that the RAF was an "open group," in no way represents us, represents the structure of the organization. It is only a collection of things that reflect accurately the goal of this entire fabrication; that way he wants to show that his information is accurate and that he knows something about the 72 offensive.

It's nonsense. When a group prepares its actions, only those who are directly participating know, only those who carry them out. That is clear within a group that struggles illegally. It is completely unnecessary to talk about it. It is, however, necessary to talk about the whole political line, how the relationship between the collective and the individual was understood not as a contradiction, but both as a goal and as a precondition. That is to say that there was the struggle, and it was based on this structure. For example, when someone has certain concrete tasks, he develops them himself, he acquires, for himself, the necessities, thinks and pursues his reflections himself; so, if someone takes on a certain task, he does what he must to be effective.

I will, perhaps, put this another way: that which we often refer to as discussion - such as that irresolvable discussion about strategy, completely divorced from practice, that goes on in many sects, where everyone simply offers an abstract point of view and maintains it against the others - that kind of discussion has no value for us. There is a simple unity: politics and struggle. And the discussion unfolds as it must. Each politic is only possible in that way as a part of the development of the structure of the group, the totality of the development of the structure of the group, the totality of the organization, and of its analysis. That means that the structure is formed out of each process, in the general work process of the group. That is where collectivization takes place, that is how a revolutionary structure functions, because it is oriented towards a goal and an end, because we do it for that reason and not for any other...

(Prinzing interrupts.)

...and what we said until now is simply that the goals of the guerrilla struggle are integrated into the structure of the struggling group, which rules out everything which has been said here.

And what follows, very clearly, from all of this, from the entire structure, from the collective determination of the goals, is, obviously, and this has already been said here, I believe, that each of us is responsible for the 72 offensive...

(Prinzing interrupts.)

Would you shut your mouth already. This is what I know, what I've lived...

The strategy against US imperialism, against the military occupation by the USA, was developed in the beginning, that is, when we were still in the phase of construction based on discussion.

We can go back even further, to the student movement, to the protest movement against the Vietnam War, because it is part of our history, because it was within this experience that the process of politicization developed. And I mean in its totality, the experience itself, on the basis of the unique situation, on the basis of alienation in the metropolises, as well as the experience of the unique possibilities, subjectivity, liberation, and the sense of what conditions would be necessary to realize this, or at least attempt to realize this.

It was as a result of the system's reaction during this period that we acquired, for the first time, an idea of where we were, an idea about this State, of the role that it plays in US strategy, how the FRG supported and made possible the intervention of the USA on all levels, military, political, financial and through propaganda.

What was new, what was strong, what, in general, gave the student movement its power, what mobilized it, was its identification with and orientation towards the liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people. It was on this basis that it could identify as part of the global process of the anti-imperialist war of liberation and understand itself as an ally of the people who struggle in the Third World and as a "second front" in the metropolises. They didn't actually manage to become a front, a part of a single structure, but by their destruction they clearly exposed the limitations of legal opposition and action. Everyone who saw this as a point of departure and didn't want to give it up saw that revolutionary politics are only possible here, can only be effective here, if they are armed, illegal and internationalist.

The movement against the Vietnam War was, as such, to sum up one more time, the subjective condition on the basis of which the RAF developed. It was on the basis of this experience and our analyses that we determined the strategic function of the guerilla in the metropole; this was to be a process within the disintegration caused by the encirclement of the imperialist centres by the liberation struggles in the Third World. The liberation struggles on the periphery that, by their military intervention, were an element of instability. And, as such, their operative foreign policy was the front.

I've spoken so much about this to explain the context for the 1972 offensive against the American bases in the FRG, to show that these actions both represent and reveal the entire process, the totality of the politics...

(Prinzling interrupts.)

Would you stop it already. You won't succeed in controlling what I say here in any way whatsoever.

I want to talk about Andreas again, because there is always an effort here to portray him as a boss or whatever garbage of that sort.

It is, in fact, very simple; if he were the boss, how come we still exist after six years²⁶? This should really be impossible. And yet we do still exist.

The precise role which Andreas always had, and it is perfectly clear that he assumed leadership, and did so from the beginning, is based on the fact that it was he that made possible the process which I've been talking about today. I believe Ulrike once said, "He had the most foresight and the greatest capacity for organization." That sums it up.

And in this process, in which each person embraces the struggle, which is a necessary precondition for the existence of the guerrilla, the decision of each person and the will to carry out the struggle - an individual either has a leadership role or he doesn't. But he doesn't demand it. There is no "right to it." It is simply a question of the clearest perspective, which I experienced in another way later, after my arrest in 74, in *Info*.

I want to say that of all of us, it was he who had the greatest ability to think things through - that is how I would characterize it - to think things through to their end point, to perceive and integrate all of the conditions and the entire process through which our struggle could be developed towards its goal. And I, naturally, oriented myself on the basis of this, because I had the same goal as him - I repeat, we oriented *ourselves* on this basis.

That was perfectly clear at the time. I can now say that I had never previously experienced this. It was for me a totally new experience. It is clear that the individual who decides to carry out the guerrilla struggle must transform all that he has previously experienced, that he must break with what he has experienced and the way in which he has experienced it.

And the smear campaign which was constantly carried out against him, obviously had a pure and simple propaganda goal: to denounce the guerrilla and demolish the moral integrity of the group. That is to say, a counter-propaganda goal, psychological warfare that operates by personalizing reality, because they cannot attack the contents of revolutionary politics without in fact giving them voice.

But in all of this, there is also a precise material goal; he is made into a horrific figure, "naked terror" personified, with the goal of psychologically preparing public opinion, of conditioning public opinion, so as to be able to assassinate him...

(Prinzing interrupts)

...exactly as occurred with Ulrike, or, for example, as it was in 72, when she was still outside, with the announcements of her suicide.

(Prinzing interrupts)

²⁶ The RAF was founded in 1970. Baader was arrested in 1972 with Raspe and Meins.

But the important thing is that leadership in the guerilla is always leadership *against* and never leadership “of”. Its goal is to make itself superfluous as a particular role within the collective group process. That is to say that its goal is to make each person capable of assuming this leadership role...

(Prinzing interrupts)

I have to repeat, I will speak here as I need to, as we must when we come here for the first time, so that what we have to say is said in the clearest possible way. And if I must think, for a moment, I’ll take the time. Is that clear?

I want to discuss another complex phenomenon, still related to structure, and I have more things to add related to Andreas. I want to talk about the period following my second arrest at the beginning of 74.

And this concerns another element here, as well: *Info*. Specifically, all this bullshit thrown at the world regarding *Info*: that it had a hierarchical structure, directives and orders. And after this story was acceptably inflated by the Federal Prosecution via the media, it is now used to make the accusation of the “establishment of a criminal association within the prison,” that is, all of this nonsense that consists of claiming that the prisoners direct illegal groups on the outside from their cells, etc. It’s such bullshit, given the entire structure, which I’ve talked about here constantly; it’s impossible and absurd on the military level, and, as a result, on the political level. In any event, even if it were technically possible, we would refuse to do it.

Good. Now about *Info*. *Info* already existed in 74 when I ended up back in prison again. As a result of the conditions they were subjected to, the prisoners had created something that went further than anything done by the group I participated in when I first came out of prison in 73. *Info* was developed as a result of the necessity, in this situation, of community, of receiving information about what is happening in general. It was a surrogate for communication.

I could explain it in this way: *Info* was the space in which we could live. Isolation represents a more intense version of the situation which dominates on the outside, which led us to engage in clandestine armed struggle in the first place. In isolation, this situation exists in its pure state, in its naked reality. Whoever doesn't find a way to struggle against this situation is destroyed. So it is necessary to control the situation and not be controlled by it.

Info was the way we found. One must understand the conditions: isolation. It's simple. There weren't many issues; either one was destroyed or else one developed something, even in there. And that simply meant *always* having the will to arrive at the goal. One must find the means to achieve it, to achieve what one wants, to obtain what one needs, what one aspires to, in isolation, alone. I learned that when I was in prison the first time, when none of this existed. One develops an enormous desire to simply communicate, and

in the only way that that is still possible, with absolute sincerity towards oneself and towards others. It's a struggle. It doesn't simply happen.

(Prinzing interrupts.)

One moment, you stupid shit. We understand clearly that for a year your method has been to attempt to silence every coherent intervention!

I was in the process of explaining that it isn't easy. It is not enough to simply want it or to wish for it. It is a highly conscious struggle, under the enormous pressure we are submitted to in isolation, to manage to communicate with each other by writing. And the process which that necessitates was made possible by Andreas, because he kept this process open at all times. He only intervened when some of the old shit, which had already been eliminated, reappeared somewhere. And, obviously, what happens is that in isolation we get entangled again in the old structures. This is unavoidable when the structures are as complex and as profoundly anchored as they are here in the metropole. I must say that the struggle that we carry out in isolation is the struggle for consciousness. If we don't succeed in establishing new consciousness, then it is the old one that imposes itself.

That is what I mean when I say that it was Andreas, in prison, just as on the outside, who gave the collective process its orientation. That his methods of struggle represent for each of us a means to orient ourselves was something that I learned from the way in which he intervened when he understood what was going on, something that I had not been aware of previously.

And one of the ways that we attempted to take responsibility, in a given phase of the process of collectivization through *Info*, was by means of criticism and self-criticism. This means radically examining oneself, to really know everything about oneself and to know the same things about each of the others. That means that the exchange, the interaction, resides in the transmission of the individual process, in an understanding of the point one is at, of the point from which one must struggle. In isolation each of us experienced again, on an entirely different existential level, the fact that struggle, that identity, is only possible collectively.

Of course, this cannot be separated from all of the other things we worked on. For example, the texts and analyses about the structure of capital, about military strategy or counter-insurgency, analyses that were developed in the process of collective discussions.

We never told anyone “you have to do this or that”, but we did say what there was to do, what each person could do, if he wanted to. The condition is having the will. Coercion and submission, or competitive struggles for imaginary positions in an imaginary hierarchy, signify, in isolation, under these conditions, that the group is on the point of fragmenting, that it won't survive much longer, that it can no longer struggle.

Only an idiot could believe all the rubbish presented here as counterpropaganda against us.

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