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The Meaning of Armed Struggle. Solidarity with the Third World in Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this chapter is the radical left wing solidarity groupings in Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s. The rebellious youth that fought what they understood as imperialism in the Third World did this not only because the Third World worked as fuel on the bonfire of rebellion at home, but also because they understood the struggles of the Third World as intertwined with the rebellious movements of Western society. By looking at three examples of Third World solidarity groups I discuss how the various groupings understood armed struggle, what the meanings of armed struggle were in the different milieus, and how this related to the Danish activists' understanding of their own solidarity work as rebellious and revolutionary endeavours. It is concluded that a concept such as radicalism cannot be applied to a question of 'either-or', but rather to a 'how?' As it does not make sense to ask whether certain groupings were for or against violence, so it does not seem fruitful to ask whether involvement in a certain direction was radical or not, without describing in great detail what made it radical.

Denne artikel handler om hvilken betydning væbnet kamp havde i forskellige tredje verdens-solidaritetstiljøer i 1960'ernes og 1970'ernes Danmark. Disse grupperinger af oprørske unge mennesker engagerede sig på forskellig vis i kampen mod det de opfattede som den vestlige verdens imperialistiske undertrykkelse af den tredje verden. Den tredje verden fungerede på denne måde både som en kamp der var berettiget i sig selv, som brændstof i det studenter – og ungdomsoprør der udspillede sig hjemme i Danmark og også som en kamp der var strukturelt, politisk og moralsk forbundet med de danske aktivisters kamp for samfundsforandring hjemme. Ved at se på tre forskellige solidaritetsgrupperinger diskuteres det i artiklen hvordan forskellige grupper forstod væbnet kamp, hvilken betydning den blev tillagt og hvordan dette hang sammen med de danske aktivisters forståelse af sig selv og deres revolutionære praksis. Artiklen viser hvordan man ikke kan forstå et begreb som radikalitet som et 'enten-eller', men som et 'hvordan'. Det giver ikke mening at spørge

om bestemte grupper var for eller imod væbnet kamp. Man må derimod undersøge hvori eventuelle radikale elementer bestod og på hvilke måder væbnet kamp indgik i heri.

‘Bring the war home’ was a very potent radical media-wise slogan in the American anti-Vietnam War movement towards the end of the 1960s. It was a twist on the more pragmatic slogan, ‘Bring the boys home’, and may be understood as a radical linking of the liberation war, fought out in Vietnam, to the commitment to political and social revolution in left wing radical milieus in the activists’ home society¹.

The focus of this chapter is not the United States but radical left wing solidarity groupings in Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the connection between ‘out there’ and ‘at home’, and the political belief that what happened out there had a relation to the home society, also influenced the commitment of the Danish solidarity milieus in various ways in that period of time. In other words, the rebellious youth that fought what they understood as imperialism in the Third World did this, not only because the Third World worked as fuel on the bonfire of rebellion at home, but also because they understood the struggles of the Third World as being intertwined with the rebellious movements of Western society.

But the question of what the rebellion was actually about is not at all unambiguous when dealing with solidarity with the Third World in the 1960s and 1970s. Who were they revolting against, how, and on what grounds? In this chapter the question of rebellion thus becomes a question of how the actors understood themselves as rebels and revolutionaries. As I will show, the questions produce different answers depending on which groupings are being investigated. This is essential when investigating the meaning of armed struggle, also in a society such as the Danish, which never experienced political violence taken to its extremes, as Western Germany, Italy or France did in the same period of time.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE THIRD WORLD AND ‘1968’—A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

In his famous book, *Political Pilgrims*, the American historian Paul Hollander describes the fascination of and solidarity with the Third World, which developed in the 1960s and 1970s, as “the rejection of Western society”². He points out that the criticism of Western capitalist society “gave rise to a new set of favourable predispositions towards countries, which became the new, if again transient, symbols of social justice and political rectitude”³. Even more polemic formulations are to be found in the British historian Tony Judt’s broad-scale work entitled *Post War. A History of Europe since 1945* in which he maintains that, “If Western youth looked beyond their borders at all, it was to exotic lands whose image floated free of irritating constraints of familiarity or information”⁴.

Hollander understands the attraction to the Third World as a politically disillusioned generation of young people turning their backs on the whole of Western culture, and Just sees it as a juvenile romantic but deeply and reprehensibly ignorant position. However the British historian Eric Hobsbawm has another, no less normative interpretation:

[...] the Third World now became the central pillar of hope and faith for those who still put their faith in social revolution [...]. The entire left, including humanitarian liberals and moderate social democrats, needed something more than social security legislation and rising real wages. The Third World could preserve its ideals, and parties belonging to the great tradition of Enlightenment need ideas as well as practical politics. They cannot survive without them⁵.

With Hobsbawm we are presented with a view of the Third World as a vitally important positive fuel, which made the entire left cast critical glances at their own society, including the material affluence it had brought along.

The relation between the wars of liberation and the de-colonization processes on the one hand, and the political and cultural upheaval on the other, is thus described from many angles, but with quite different conclusions. In this context the quotations serve to illustrate the fact that the relation between the events in the Third World and the upheaval in the West was crucial, first and foremost as a mark of political and cultural positions. Furthermore, the quotations serve the purpose of illustrating that there are considerably different ways of understanding these positions, what they implied and what purposes they served.

To most solidarity groupings in Denmark the Third World constituted a decisive factor in the 'World Revolution'. But some saw the Third World as the one and only possible place to start such a revolution. In these circles the Western working class was thought to have been bribed and deprived by capitalism, as was the labour movement, and consequently of no use whatsoever in a revolutionary mobilization. So if revolution was the aim, the Third World was the logical place to provide solidarity, e.g. money for weapons. Such viewpoints were to be found in extreme radicalized Palestine solidarity groupings, often inspired by Maoist ideas, which were widespread in several minor radical parties, but never formed a well organized movement as was the case in Norway and Sweden⁶.

At the other end of the scale one can find groupings that mainly used solidarity involvement in the Third World as a mobilizing element for the Danish working class – as well as for broader parts of the population. These groupings were likely to be populated by activists from the Danish Communist Party (DKP). People on these positions entertained the belief that the Danish working class and the Third World populations were basically fighting the same battle. It was an inherent strategy that the involvement should be as broad and extensive as possible. In a longer perspective the aim was to make the Danish Communist Party visible and attractive⁷. DKP had experienced enormous parliamentary success in the aftermath of World War II, due to its central part in

the Danish resistance movement. But by the 1960s the international communist movement had suffered from serious crisis, and DKP was not an obvious choice for young people who wished to revolt.

The pragmatic DKP and the rebellious Mao-inspired youth groups can be seen as two extremes, which illustrate how ideology could play a role concerning both which strategy to choose, and how the Third World could be understood as part of one's involvement.

"Can power be reached through voting – can power be reached without struggle?"⁸ Those were questions raised in the lyrics by the famous Danish political rock band Red Mother after Salvador Allende's death in Chile in 1973. Since then, it has been a point in the discussion, both in the public debate and in areas of scholarly historiography, that not all of the left wing milieus engaged in solidarity with the Third World rejected armed struggle as a legitimate political means of action. In this debate the Cold War perspective has in many ways been predominant⁹. This perspective has prevailed in spite of the fact that the decolonization processes and the liberation wars in the Third World are frequently singled out as very influential factors in the appearance of a north-south dimension in that period, which softened the understanding of the world as blocked in the east-west conflict.

In 2005 the 4-volume work, *Denmark during the Cold War. The Security Policy Situation 1945-1991*, was published by an official source. It has since become better known as "The Cold War Report", or the DIIS report, since it was produced by the "Danish Institute for International Studies"¹⁰. Originally, the report was to throw light exclusively on the security policy situation and military threat against Denmark in that period of time, but in 2002 the terms of reference were extended by the liberal government in office to include also the home policy situation including the activities of the political parties and organizations, so that parts of the solidarity work in the 1960s and 1970s were also taken into account.

After the publication, the analysis of the solidarity groups has been the object of renewed scholarly interest mainly because it is now possible to use Police Intelligence Service reports as source material for struggles between the various fractions and infiltrations of the organizations by the Danish Communist Party, but also because of misleading interpretations of, for example, the Vietnam Movement¹¹. In this context it is interesting that left wing activities, including those related to solidarity with the Third World, are interpreted in a Cold War – and security policy – perspective, where the role of the Danish Communist Party is of central interest. The analyses of the political slogans are for example preoccupied with the question of anti-Americanism, which is not necessarily the most relevant perspective if the aim is to understand political differences. The security policy angle is legitimate and therefore is in no way disputed here. The point is that the dichotomy of the Cold War perspective makes it difficult to analyse the many different and sometimes mutually conflicting dividing lines to be found

in the solidarity milieus – for instance it is far from always a question of the Soviet Union against the USA – and therefore what this perspective alone may add in terms of new knowledge or deeper insight in the context is of limited importance.

In the particular Cold War perspective, the question of armed struggle has been interpreted as a question of whether the left-wing groups basically supported liberal democracy or, in their revolutionary endeavour, actually wanted to overthrow it. Again, it must be emphasized that such a dichotomous approach is a barrier to a more detailed understanding of the meaning of armed struggle in the various groups. It is very difficult to see support for ANC's armed struggle in South Africa as a basically anti-democratic involvement, just to mention one example. The question in this chapter is therefore not whether the various milieus were for or against violence. Armed struggle could appear in many different ways in different milieus, and it does not make sense to distinguish between groups who supported armed struggle and those who did not. On the contrary, I think the problem may be approached by investigating aspects like ideology, rhetoric, use of symbols, and not least concrete experiences and practices to be found in the groups.

The central questions of this chapter are thus as follows: how did the various groups understand armed struggle? What was the meaning of armed struggle in the various milieus? And how did this relate to the Danish activists' understanding of their own involvement in solidarity as a rebellious and revolutionary endeavour?

I shall try to answer the questions by means of three scenarios:

- The Danish Trotskyist solidarity involvement in Algeria in the early 1960s.
- *De Danske Vietnamkomiteers* [The Danish Vietnam Committees] (DDV) involvement in the late 1960s and the early 1970s.
- The involvement which developed in the so-called *Forbundet Mod Imperialismen* [The League Against Imperialism] (FMI) in the second half of the 1970s.

Jointly, these scenarios may illustrate central elements in the development solidarity with the Third World went through during the period of time from the early 1960s till the end of the 1970s – from anti-authoritarian activism to theoretical ideological dogmatism, a development which will be discussed and problematized along the way. At the same time the three scenarios are meant to introduce different aspects of the impact of armed struggle. It should be pointed out that by choosing them, I am focusing on the more radical solidarity milieus of the period. The activities of the Danish Trotskyists took place at the same time as a broad-scale humanitarian project for Algeria; the DDV both co-operated with and fought the more moderate part of the Danish Vietnam movement, Vietnam 69; and the FMI had its worst enemy in another comprehensive solidarity organization, the *Internationalt Forum* [International Forum], that tried to mobilize much more broadly than had the FMI. Consequently, the scenarios can only illuminate mutual differences and similarities in the radical milieus, and not

how they were placed in relation to less radical milieus, and what that meant for their self-comprehension and representation.

THE DANISH TROTSKYISTS AND THE ALGERIAN WAR

A bloody liberation war broke out in Algeria in 1954, but it was not until 1960 that a small magazine, “Algier Frit” [Free Algeria] – later changing its name to “Internationalt Perspektiv” [International Perspective] – started to be published in Denmark. The initiative came from a group of former volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, but they were joined by young activists, e.g. via the big marches arranged by the Campaign against Nuclear Arms, frequently designated as the first broader political movement after the Second World War. The network, which thereby was established, became of great importance to the incipient Vietnam Movement¹².

The group called themselves “Friends of Free Algeria” and soon it also attracted a Trotskyist group, which contributed not only a darker political interpretation of the Algeria War, but also economic means and an international network. The Danish Trotskyists did not form a proper political party in this period, but worked politically by entering different organisations and other parties, for example the “Revolutionære Socialister” [Revolutionary Socialists] and the SUF [Socialistic Youth Forum]. All together they never counted more than a few hundred members, of which many had been excluded or had left the DKP. The involvement in Algeria was carried out by a small group of about five people. Thus, it was not the cream of a well-organized party, but rather a bunch of political ‘wild rangers’ without party ambitions. A pram shop situated in one of Copenhagen’s working-class districts, Nørrebro, was used as a cover-address and political meeting room, and an illegal production of spare parts for weapons started, as did an equally illegal transportation of the spare parts to a weapons factory in Morocco. Here, the Algerian liberation movement *Front Liberation National* [The National Liberation Front] (FLN) could find supplies for their fight against the French colonial power.

The armed struggle in Algeria was thus seen as legitimate, necessary and worthy of support. Within the legal area of those involved in supporting Algerian freedom this also could be seen by the fact that the Algerian physician and author Frantz Fanon’s writings were translated and published in the “Algier Frit” magazine¹³. Fanon’s famous work, *The Wretched of the Earth* was published in French in 1961¹⁴, but the work was not translated nor published in Danish unabridged until 1966¹⁵. Until then, it was only through magazines like “Algier Frit” that part of the Danish public had access to the texts. Fanon sought to legitimize the use of violence in the struggle for liberation, on the grounds that the language of the colonial power was violence, and that violence must be met by violence. At the same time, Fanon argued, the armed struggle would turn the colonized being into human beings, since armed struggle was a worthy form of expression, a just counterpart to oppression. Another important aspect in the legal area of involvement in solidarity with

Algeria was the exposition of Denmark, seen – as a member of NATO – as an accomplice with blood on its hands, tacitly legitimizing colonialism of the worst kind. As mentioned, the Friends of the Free Algeria counted several former volunteers from the Spanish Civil War, and besides, the Danish Communist Party had played an important role in the Danish resistance movement during the German occupation from 1940-1945. The Algeria engagement was therefore influenced by watchwords taken from the anti-Fascist heritage, rooted in the period of inter-war and the occupation.

However, although the ideological understanding of the Algeria activists might set the stage for it, the armed struggle as such was not used as a mobilizing element to gain domestic support. No major demonstrations against the Danish foreign policy were organized to stir up confrontations with the forces of law and order, and the magazine did not publish any photos of heroic Algerian guerrillas from the National Liberation Front. On the contrary, the photos showed images of dead Algerian children, victims of torture by the French Army and *Organisation Armée Secrète* [The Secret Army Organisation] (OAS) and similar intense examples of the horror of war – not images suggesting its revolutionary potential. Although the rhetoric of many of the Danish Trotskyists was deeply anchored in the Danish inter-war and occupation history, the armed struggle had as its focus those abroad, namely the Algerian people and their representatives, The National Liberation Front. According to the Trotskyists, it was the duty of a rich NATO country like Denmark to object to the French warfare, but no ideological parallels were drawn between the struggles of the Algerians and the Danish working class. Solidarity was characterized by concrete and ideological activism rather than by broad-scale struggle mobilizing people in the Danish environment.

THE DANISH VIETNAM COMMITTEES AND THE ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN REVOLUTIONARY ENTHUSIASM

When protests against the Vietnam War began in Denmark in 1964, left wing groups' solidarity with the armed struggle in the Third World was not a new phenomenon. But the Vietnam Movement was to become the biggest of its kind in the period, the most powerful and incisive solidarity movement, able to mobilize people from many areas of society. The way in which armed struggle was understood in the solidarity work with the liberation wars in the Third World actually changed towards the end of the 1960s, when the Vietnam protests were at their height. In the first place it is interesting that the symbolism of the armed struggle, in the shape of the machine gun, the clenched fist, the heroic, preferably female, Vietnamese guerrilla soldier, was to be found not only in the Danish Vietnam Committee's magazine, "Vietnam Solidarity", but also in much broader circles of rebellious youth cultures which sprouted in the mid-1960's. In 1968 the 'beat magazine' "Superlove" advertised on the same plane posters of Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and Bob Dylan and of Mao, Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh¹⁶. It was not

uncommon among young people to have both types of posters hanging on their wall and, seen as part of the same youth culture, these posters held many different elements of liberation, e.g. ideological, political, social and sexual. It is however remarkable that the icons of violence completely overshadowed what might also have served as symbols of the struggles in the Third World, e.g. the Indian political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi. Thus the icons of armed struggle (in the Third World) seemed to have a special appeal for the rebellious youth cultures.

In this context of revolutionary enthusiasm, where an anti-authoritarian youth rebellion shared references with the armed struggle of the Third World, physical confrontations with the police became part of the concrete experiences which activists might acquire. This was the case in the Danish Vietnam Committees. If one looks at the activists' own magazines, the discussions triggered by the violent confrontations with the police show a clear indication of ambivalence. On the one hand, the confrontations were understood as a unmasking of the liberal democratic society, such as activists had also experienced in the USA. During the early period of the Cold War, an understanding of the free Western world as a defender of democracy and civil rights prevailed in Denmark, as in the West in general. This understanding was seriously damaged as a consequence of the current commentaries about American warfare in Vietnam; and the personal experiences of Danish activists, face to face with police brutality, only increased the effect of unmasking.

On the other hand the activists were not unambiguously enthusiastic about violent confrontation with the police. Thus, in May 1970, shortly after four students had been shot dead during political unrest at Kent State University, Ohio, in the US, one could read in "Politisk Revy" [Political Review]: "We have to defend ourselves against attacks. We don't want to wage war against the police"¹⁷. In the streets of Copenhagen, many activists wore helmets at the demonstrations – for good practical reasons but also with a powerful symbolic effect.

In September 1970, the World Bank held a summit in Copenhagen, and no one less than Robert McNamara, the American minister of defence from 1961-1968, was now the president of this organization which was considered a neo-imperialist tool, serving the capitalist world, by many left wing activists. The World Bank summit occasioned the most violent confrontations between activists and the police of that period, leading to many wounded and arrested. It led to much reflection in the solidarity milieu, and the actual abandonment of street fights as a means of mobilizing. To many of the rank-and-file participants in the huge demonstrations this was presumably connected with a certain fatigue and the failing attraction of intense and tremendous crowds of people. There have been, however, no major investigations of the rank-and-file's reasons for declining participation, so for now this must remain a qualified guess. As far as the leaders of the Danish Vietnam Committees are concerned, giving up confrontations also had strategic reasons:

We find no means whatsoever to be too harsh in the struggle against American imperialism and its lackeys, but we think that the spontaneous and unorganized fights against the

police which the last few days have witnessed do not serve our political purpose. The kind of spontaneity which has been practiced contributes to broadening the gap between a small group of militant activists and the Danish population and may lead to a situation where parts of the general population and the working class will let themselves be mobilised by the liberal state power propaganda machinery against the anti-imperialist movement and consequently against their own genuine interests. [...] The provocation of the rulers should be answered by ice-cold tranquillity¹⁸.

In spite of this effort to mark their distance from violence, the street fights were clearly linked with a more acute understanding of a connection between the Vietnamese struggle and their own personal fight in the streets of Copenhagen, no less than with that of the working class. Anti-imperialist activism was seen as a fight for the genuine interests of “parts of the population and the working class”, not something taking place far away in a remote South East Asian country or elsewhere in the Third World. If one looks at the use of symbols in the pamphlet which prepared the World Bank demonstrations, it is noteworthy that the capitalist world was presented as classic imperialism but also, at the same time, as a basically violent social system. An example could be a bleeding Chiquita banana, which symbolized the capitalist exploitation of the poor banana pickers in Latin America. Another example was a mincing machine where the Third World continents are minced to pieces while a smiling Robert McNamara is turning the handle¹⁹. The presentation of this structural violence indicates an intensified rhetoric, which emphasized the anti-imperialist fight as reaching further than the war in Vietnam. Add to this that the Danish activists could now include themselves as physical combatants and, furthermore, establish solidarity committees for comrades who were detained in prisons in Copenhagen. This could serve as another example of a fusion of fates with the guerrillas of the Third World, a circumstance of great symbolic importance in the solidarity milieu.

In the late 1960s and the early 1970s the Danish Vietnam Committees thus considered armed struggle legitimate, not only for the Vietnamese but also, although in quite another way, in a greater struggle against imperialism and capitalist violence, a violence they thought they were themselves exposed to, and also had to respond to. Where engagement for Algeria had taken an essential part of its rhetoric and understanding of armed struggle from the anti-Fascist tradition, the new aspects were linked to the activists' concrete experiences and the mobilizing events in which the radical part of the movement for Vietnam participated.

THE LEAGUE AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND THE THEORETICAL ANTI-IMPERIALISM OF THE 1970S

In the middle of the 1970s involvement in the Vietnam question had drawn to a close. The Danish Social Democratic government had officially recognized the North Vietnamese government in the late summer of 1971, and the war no longer mobilized Danish activists as broadly as in the late 1960s. In an attempt to unite the left wing

anti-imperialistic forces, several other solidarity groups were now taking shape, e.g. *Forbundet mod Imperialismen* [The League against Imperialism] (FMI) in 1975. The FMI was very inclusive in the sense that it unfolded its anti-imperialist engagement in relation to South East Asia, Latin America, Africa, as well as the Middle East. In fact it was a fusion of the remains of the radical Vietnam Movement, the Indo-China Committees, plus the Palestine and Gulf Committees, both established in the late 1960s. But the FMI was also closely connected with the small party-preparatory organization called the *Forbundet Socialisterne* [The Socialist League], which represented a dogmatic interpretation of Leninist party theory. The *Forbundet Socialisterne* was only one of many small, marginalized party-preparatory organisations in the outskirts of the parliamentary sphere, and as such it may serve as an example of a political phenomenon, a sign of the times. FMI was quite radical in the sense that revolutionary development in Denmark, which they believed in, was seen as closely connected with the liberation movements' struggles against imperialism in the Third World. With the so-called proletarian international as a basis, they understood the class struggle in Denmark as part of the international struggle against imperialism – it was, basically, one and the same thing. This was a significant intensification compared with involvement with Vietnam towards the end of the 1960s. The elements of anti-authoritarian enthusiasm, central to parts of the Vietnam involvement, had been succeeded by a much more theoretically focused revolutionary enthusiasm in FMI.

The FMI published a magazine, the “International Bulletin”, written within the framework of a theoretical ideological discourse focusing on the struggle and its continued intensification. The Palestinian problem constituted a large part of the reason for involvement. It is worth noticing that almost all the pictures that printed showed armed struggle and an aesthetic worship of its beauty: Handsome Palestinian guerrilla warriors, Fedayeen in rugged landscapes, machine guns ornamented with flowers and flags, and gun sights as graphical frames around several pictures. The actual armed struggle was seen as a central strategy in the concrete Palestine problem, but at the same time it reached far beyond that actual war. Apart from the fact that the analysis at the root of this understanding was revolutionary, the connection was also formulated in quite violent language:

Only a people's war can conquer imperialism – in the Middle East as elsewhere. [...] Such a victory and the preceding revolutionary process will signify a final victory over and liquidation of the reactionary forces in the area and furthermore, to a large extent, increase the contradictions in the world imperialist system²⁰.

Such a significant formulation of the legitimacy of armed struggle and its revolutionary potential, was typical only of the radical solidarity milieus, not of the general opinion on the Danish left wing, not to mention Danish public debate as such. On the background of Holocaust in general and the German occupation of Denmark from 1940-1945 in particular, the State of Israel had, since its foundation, enjoyed great sympathy

in Denmark, also in left wing circles. The kibbutzes had been considered progressive socialist experiments, which many young people set out to join. This understanding was challenged by the Palestinian-Israeli War in 1967 and led to bitter discussions in several left wing milieus. Hence, it is even more interesting that the FMI in its broad repertoire of activities, such as seminars, meetings, pamphlets and magazine publications, did not include street demonstrations, which they considered a stupid intoxication from the 1960s. The war they wanted to bring home was rather an ideological mobilization, a consciousness-raising war aiming at the masses, i.e. the working class, and not the 'population' that the Danish Vietnam Committees wished to target. The linking of 'the struggle out there' with 'the struggle at home' had been intensified and sharpened in theory, rhetorically and in the use of symbols, but in their practical 'doing' and concrete strategic considerations the combatants had left the streets of Copenhagen.

CONCLUSION

What the different groups involved in solidarity had in common was that they possessed an inherent radicalism. This was a logical consequence of the fact that the Third World conflicts of the period were armed and violent. But the meaning of armed struggle was different in different political and ideological milieus. For those involved in radical support of Algeria, armed struggle was connected to the anti-Fascist tradition, but seen both as a continuation of past struggles against degradation and as a humanization of the people Frantz Fanon called "the wretched of the Earth". Amongst those who gave radical support to involvement with Vietnam, armed struggle was considered a legitimate counter reaction to what was thought to be a total unmasking of the overwhelming brutality of the free Western world, but simultaneously it was linked with a revolutionary and anti-authoritarian enthusiasm, which also included what might be called the Danish activists' own political life situation. And for the FMI armed struggle had a central theoretical significance, e.g. as proof of correct analysis and a consciousness-raising strategy rather than as an actual practice of solidarity. Consequently there were various types of rebellion and protest linked to armed struggle in the different solidarity groups mentioned here. Generally speaking, a shift seems to have taken place as far as armed struggle is concerned, from initially being concentrated on the oppressed colonized peoples of the Third World to later, in theory, comprising all oppressed groups in the capitalist world order, and thus also the Danish working class. It can be seen as a shift of focus from 'out there' to 'at home'. A more specific type of difference between the various kinds of involvement in solidarity efforts should be mentioned, namely the actors who were identified as relevant subjects, friends and foes alike. In the case of Algeria, there was a concrete population opposing a colonial power, and the protest towards the latter also to a great extent contained a strong element of opposition and rebellion against the Western military alliance, NATO. In the case of Vietnam there was an entire population fighting against a superior power as well, but even though these protests also included Danish foreign policy, they were more

clearly linked to the personal experiences the activists had with the Danish police. What was central here was the actual mobilization. The 1970s were definitely also characterized reference to real populations and wars, but the focus had in many ways changed in the direction of a more theoretical striving for correct analysis and understanding. On the one hand the 1970s were characterized by a wide range of practical solidarity activities and concrete actions, on the other, involvement was supported by theoretical abstractions. Here the rebellion was directed against social order rather than against a particular war, and the support for the struggle of the Fedayeen in Palestine was to go hand in hand with the ideologists' fight for consciousness-raising.

In Danish historiography there is a commonly accepted '1968' narrative, which paints a picture of an anti-authoritarian rebellion, which grew more and more radical and finally fossilized into dogmatic theory. This narrative is recognizable in the development I have outlined here. On the other hand it can only be considered partly valid if we examine both the ideology and the practice of the solidarity movements. As has clearly emerged, it is quite evident that a concept such as radicalism cannot be applied to a question of 'either-or', but rather to a 'how?' As it does not make sense to ask whether certain groups were for or against violence, so it does not seem fruitful to ask whether a certain kind of involvement was radical or not, without describing in great detail what made it radical. As the scenarios demonstrate, support of Algerians was not characterized by violence-worshipping aesthetics or use of symbols, but the illegal actions undertaken must be considered radical. In case of the FMI it was rather the other way round. Hence, it becomes essential to grasp a whole series of elements: ideology, aesthetics, language, symbols, and practice, plus their mutual relations. One might say that it is impossible to draw a straight line between ideological formulations on the one hand and practice on the other. But one must continue to insist on the investigation of the relationship between the two. Before the idea of 'armed struggle' is attached to '1968' as a particularly radical phenomenon, ruptures as well as continuity should be given a thorough going-over.

NOTES

- ¹ J. Varon, *Bringing the War Home. The Weather Underground, The Red Army Fraction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, Los Angeles 2004.
- ² P. Hollander, *Political Pilgrims. Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba*, New York 1983, p. 177.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- ⁴ T. Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, London 2006, p. 421.
- ⁵ E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London 1996, pp. 436-437.
- ⁶ P. Øvig, *Blekingegadebanden. Den danske celle*, Copenhagen 2007. See also K. Salomon, *Rebeller i takt med tiden. FNL-rørelsen og 60-talets politiska ritualer*, Lund 1996.
- ⁷ S.H. Rasmussen, *Sære Alliancer. Politiske bevægelser i efterkrigtidens Danmark*, Odense 1997.

- ⁸ Quoted from the song “Til Allende” [To Allende] at the album “Grillbaren” [The Grill Bar] by the political rock band “Røde Mor” [Red Mother], 1973.
- ⁹ J. Liljegren, *Weekendavisen og opgøret med venstrefløjen*, unpublished master thesis, University of Southern Denmark 2002. Several debate books have been published on the subject, see for example, J. Andersen, B. Haarder (eds.), *Hvem holdt de med – en debatbog om hvorfor politisk aktive på den yderste venstrefløj var i PETs søgelys under den kolde krig*, Søborg 1999; B. Blüdnikow, *Opgøret om den kolde krig*, Søborg 2003; A. Holm, P.S. Schmidt, *Opgøret om venstrefløjen under den kolde krig*, Copenhagen 2003.
- ¹⁰ DIIS, *Danmark under den kolde krig. Den sikkerhedspolitiske situation 1945-1991*, Copenhagen 2005.
- ¹¹ K.H. Nielsen, *Fagligt sjusk om venstrefløj og protestbevægelser under den kolde krig*, in “Arbejderhistorie”, 2006, 2, 3. See also “Arbejderhistorie”, 2006, 1, 2, 3; “Arbejderhistorie”, 2007, 1.
- ¹² S.H. Rasmussen, J. Nordentoft, *Kampagnen mod Atomvåben og Vietnambevægelsen 1960-1972*, Odense 1991.
- ¹³ “Algier Frit”, April 1961, 5.
- ¹⁴ F. Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, Paris 1961.
- ¹⁵ Id., *Fordømte her på jorden*, Copenhagen 1966.
- ¹⁶ “Superlove”, June, September 1968.
- ¹⁷ “Politisk Revy” was a Danish New Left fortnightly newspaper.
- ¹⁸ “Vietnam Solidaritet”, 1970, 8.
- ¹⁹ “Verdensbankpjece”, special edition of “Vietnam Solidaritet”, 1970, 7.
- ²⁰ Part of a resolution adopted at FMI’s Middle East Conference, quoted from “International Bulletin”, Easter 1975, 1.

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