

# MOVING THROUGH THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND



Hello. I'm going to read **A DECLARATION OF A STATE OF WAR.**

Revolutionary war will be complicated and protracted. It includes mass struggle and clandestine struggle, peaceful and violent, political and economic, cultural and military, where all forms are developed in harmony with armed struggle.

Without mass struggle there can be no *revolution*.

Without armed struggle there can be no *victory*.

We never intended to spend the next five or twenty-five years of our lives in jail. Ever since SDS became revolutionary, we've been trying to show how it is possible to overcome the frustration and impotence that comes from trying to reform this system. Kids know the lines are drawn; revolution is touching all of our lives. Tens of thousands have learned that protest and marches don't do it. Revolutionary violence is the only way. All over the world, people fighting Amerikan imperialism look to Amerika's youth to use our strategic position behind enemy lines to join forces in the destruction of the empire.

Black people have been fighting almost alone for years.

*We psyched ourselves up for what was a disgusting romanticization of violence.* Being a pacifist, anywhere in the world, was the beginning of the conversation.

I want to keep it complicated, to defend complexity against the distorting labels that come to us in neat packages and summary forms — apologizing in general is asking too much.

*Was pacifism a philosophy, a religion, a strategy, or tactical alternative?*

In my reading of Marx, the mode of production was the sum total of all the relations of production, of all the key ways production was organized. So national liberation struggles weren't some peripheral theatre, always secondary to workers in the U.S. and Europe. Rather, because imperialism subjected the economies of whole nations, those struggled were crucial to how capitalism was organized on a global scale. In a way these theoretical positions affirmed what was already at the heart of our politics: racism and sexism are far more than bad ideas; white and male supremacy are deep, fundamental structures, which, along with class, are central to defining the system.

We've known that our job is to **LEAD WHITE KIDS INTO ARMED REVOLUTION.**

The Chicago police / FBI murders of Black Panther Party leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in Chicago on December 4, 1969, gave new urgency to the already escalating relationship with authorities. *I tremble at Fred's murder, as I trembled then. I trembled with rage, it's true, and fear. I trembled with uncertainty: What could we do to survive?* How could we help the remaining panthers? Never again will they fight alone.

*Thirty-three* **BLACK DEMONSTRATORS WERE SHOT BY POLICE** during the barrage of gunfire, Three died of their wounds... It was clear that black activists were suffering a response to protest that was different from whites. Maybe, I wondered, it was only a matter of time before they would be shooting at us as well.

These are hard conditions to live through. But they are favorable for the people and for revolution. Our intention is to disrupt the empire...to emancipate it, to put pressure on the cracks, to make it hard to carry out its bloody functioning against the people of the world, to join the world struggle, to attack from the inside. Our intention is to encourage the people... to provoke leaps in confidence and consciousness, to stir the imagination, to popularize power, to agitate, to organize, to join in every way possible to people's day-to-day struggles. Our intention is to forge an underground...a clandestine political organization engaged in every form of struggle.

*(I find all of this incredibly constricting and false, for us to be able to express who we are and I think it could be better if we were talking to each other.)*

... activities were unruly, impolite, urgent, and insistent. They involved breaking doors and shattering expectations. Protesters broke the law, they anticipated arrest.

In the context of two thousands live each day, how do we define violence? How do we apportion responsibility? Most of the New Left did not exclude all political violence. Its historical roots were saturated in the traditions of John Brown and Harriet Tubman, the IWW and Emma Goldman. If we supported the African National Congress in their efforts to overthrow apartheid in South Africa, if we recognized the imperatives that led to the principle of armed self-defense, if we knew the rules were different for blacks and whites, how could we justify



American exceptionalism? It is an illusion that imperialism will decay peacefully. Imperialism has meant constant war. Imperialists defend their control of the means of life with terrible force.

*(I don't feel like the words we're shying away from are really rhetoric. Just because large numbers of people are not comfortable with, say, a word like imperialism, doesn't mean it's rhetoric. It means we have a job over the long run, which is to find somehow to explain what imperialism is. We have no choice but to use the word. The same is true for racism. So rhetoric is only rhetoric if you can't find a way to explain it, to make it make sense.)*

Now we are adapting the classic guerrilla strategy of the Viet Cong and the urban guerrilla strategy of the Tupamaros to our own situation here in the most technically advanced country in the world. The development of guerilla organization and armed activity against the state is most advanced in the Black community, where the tradition and necessity for resistance is highest. Armed actions push forward people's consciousness and commitment. Revolutionary action generates revolutionary consciousness; growing consciousness develops revolutionary action. Weather reduced that move from resistance to revolution down to tactics. This heated discourse downplays the gritty, critical work of organizing, educating, and participating. It sounds as if the complex, layered, and dense manifestations of liberatory change could be summarized solely as struggle and war.

Ché taught us that *"revolutionaries move like fish in the sea."* The alienation and contempt that young people have for this country has created the ocean for this revolution. Young people devoured the writings of Frantz Fanon, Ida B. Wells, Eduardo Galeano, Simone de Beauvoir, Ho Chi Minh, C. L. R. James, Jane Addams, Albert Camus, Che Guevara, Allen Ginsberg, Doris Lessing, W. E. B. DuBois, Herbert Marcuse, and Nelson Mandela. We looked to the Third World, the Global South, to small nations, revolutionary liberation struggles that were anticolonial and egalitarian.

**WE LIVE IN A WHIRLWIND;** nonetheless, time is on the side of the guerillas. We're not hiding out but we're invisible.

Underground is not the right word  
it makes it seem too simple,  
as if there is an easy way to disappear  
a place to go...  
And when you were captured, sister,  
I wept  
For all of us.

This was totally true of those who died in the New York townhouse explosion. Under the thin burnt orange carpeting, my bare feet felt the old, wood floor vibrating with escalating intensity. A blast reverberated through the house and in place of the ironing board, a mountain of splintered wood and brick rose up all around me. I could only open my eyes off and on, so that the tears could momentarily clear off the dust that grated like sandpaper beneath my lids. I cried out "Adam," Terry's nom de guerre, and scrambled to the edge of the crater, only to be blinded now by brightness. The third person who was killed there was Terry Robbins, who led the first rebellion at Kent State less than two years ago.

Denunciations of struggles of the sixties as a failure do the enemy's work. Weaknesses are plenty but lessons won't be drawn apart from the context. Like most clichés and myths they fail to heal and even to inform. Each has a thread of truth to hang itself on, while each dissolves complexity and destroys contextual content. Our analysis of white supremacy seemed to require that we act to reject our position of privilege, that *we put our bodies on the line*, that we intervene to open a new front in the struggle with repressive forces. Weather made a decision to not injure or kill people, any people — and reaffirmed that decision over and over again.

Yes,  
*let us wail and weep together,*  
so that our lament  
becomes — also — a weapon  
which we direct against the vicious demons  
who haunt our world today.

Freaks are revolutionaries and revolutionaries are freaks. **IF YOU WANT TO FIND US, THIS IS WHERE WE ARE.** In every tribe, commune, dormitory, farmhouse, barracks and townhouse where kids are making love, smoking dope and loading guns — fugitives from Amerikan justice are free to go.

This is the way we celebrate the example of Eldridge Cleaver and H. Rap Brown and all black revolutionaries who first inspired us by their fight behind enemy lines for the liberation of their people.

*For Assata  
For Fred  
For Diana Oughton, Ted Gold and Terry Robbins,*  
and for all the revolutionaries who are still on the move here, there has been no question for a long time now—we will never go back. **WE MUST ARM OUR SPIRIT.** When the spirit is armed, the people are strong.

