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## **Interview with Comrades from the RAF**

**September 85**

**Q:** *You know that there has been and still is a very heated discussion about the Air Base action and the shooting of GI Pimental<sup>1</sup>. Most important, you gave the cops an opportunity to construct their propaganda against the action.*

**A:** It was certainly a mistake not to send the second communiqué and the ID card together. We presumed that those who understood the action would make the connection.

**Q:** *Why did you send the ID card at all?*

**A:** *A funny question, really. As if it was a private war between the RAF and Pimental.*

**Q:** *But still, it was a new kind of step, which you have not explained.*

**A.** This step was determined by the altered national and international conditions. Besides striking the target, the attacks against the Headquarters in Heidelberg, in Frankfurt, and the attacks against Haig, Rammstein and Kroesen<sup>2</sup> also essentially had the function of creating political consciousness about the military functioning of US imperialism and, thus, about the struggle against it. This is the basis, created by the anti-imperialist struggle, from which we continue to struggle. This step forward, the escalation that corresponds to the imperialist escalation, is to extend the attack against the depth and ramifications of the politico-military position established here by US power. If they seek to perfect their strategic coordinating capacity in order to be able to turn the machinery of isolation loose, or, with their superior strength, to be able to smash anything that resists their control, then their confidence in the military machine functioning as smoothly as

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<sup>1</sup> On August 8, 1985, the RAF and the French anti-imperialist guerilla group Action Directe claimed responsibility for a car bomb attack on Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt, West Germany. Two people were killed. On August 25, the RAF claimed responsibility for the shooting of Edward Pimental, an American soldier whose ID was used to gain access to the Air Base. Pimental's ID was originally sent to the media with a single piece of paper bearing the RAF and Action Directe symbols. Much controversy within the West German Left followed this action.

<sup>2</sup> ) On May 11, 1972, the RAF attacked the US Army Headquarters in Frankfurt. The bombing, in retaliation for the military blockade against North Vietnam, destroyed the entrance of the Officer's Club, injured 13 soldiers and killed a Colonel. On May 24, 1972, the Headquarters of the US Air Force in Heidelberg was attacked. A Captain and two Sergeants were killed, 5 other soldiers were injured. On June 25, 1979, the RAF attacked and narrowly missed killing General Alexander Haig, Commander-In-Chief of NATO. On August 31, 1981, the RAF attacked the US Air Force Headquarters in Rammstein. On September 13, 1981, the RAF attacked and injured General Frederick Kroesen, Commanding General of the US Army and of NATO Section Middle East. The communiqués released with each of these actions can be viewed on the German Guerilla website (<http://www.germanguerilla.com>).

they want it to when they need it must be undermined. Every attack against the position of US power is also an attack against the basis of the FRG<sup>3</sup> state, because it can only realize its own aspirations for political power with the support of the US military. This determines the line of attack, which is the central issue for the anti-imperialist struggle here.

**Q:** *"It is based on a practical understanding of the international class war, with a perspective for the development of the revolutionary process in the West European metropole" is what you say in your communiqué. What exactly is meant by that?*

**A:** It is a practical conception of the direct correlation between the development of the revolution here and in its international dimension, the international class war. We are talking about an awareness that for revolutionary politics the process must be oriented towards this correlation, because there is no objective for us except smashing and radically altering the imperialist system by international class war. For many people, this was evident as never before as a result of the experiences of last winter<sup>4</sup> and the current situation; El Salvador, Lebanon, the struggles in the Philippines and in South Africa.

With this action, we wanted to clearly point out what is conceptually important here and now; TO BRING THE RESISTANCE UP TO THE LEVEL OF THE INTENSITY OF THE EXISTING SITUATION.

Simultaneously, the liberation movements are confronted with the bloody offensive of US imperialism worldwide. Against this strategy, a revolutionary strategy has developed in the form of an escalation of the political-military attack against the war machine and all who are militarily involved in this war. The revolutionary resistance, with all of its initiatives, campaigns and attacks, must strengthen and extend its political and military capacity to act on the front line. So, our response in the aftermath of the action was entirely different than that of others; we regret the discrepancy between our means and the extent of the imperialist destruction and genocide.

**Q:** *What do you mean by "all who are involved in this war?"*

**A:** Concerning the Air Base, it is quite clear. The soldiers keep the machines, computers and weapons for intervention operational. Some of them fly to the Mediterranean region and to the Middle East. These facts are known. Is it the case that these soldiers, simply because they are in Frankfurt, should *not* be considered to be directly at war, should have their "peaceful rest areas" here? A Commandante from the FMLN<sup>5</sup> said, "THIS CANNOT BE!" Exactly.

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<sup>3</sup> FRG - Federal Republic of Germany, West Germany.

<sup>4</sup> "Last winter" refers to the December 84 - January 85 hunger strike by political prisoners. This hunger strike provoked several hundred solidarity actions, and was generally seen as a leap forward towards the anti-imperialist front in West Germany.

<sup>5</sup> FMLN - *Frente Farabundo Marti por Libertad Nacional*, El Salvadorean guerilla front.

**Q:** *Do you think they are aware of these facts? Most of them believe that if they just do their jobs, everything will be fine.*

**A:** But that is impossible. Those that do "their job" in El Salvador might tell you that they are there to keep the Russians out of Central and South America. They certainly don't think much beyond that. That is the mercenary mentality of killers. That's why we have been talking about Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, the Air-Land Battle Doctrine<sup>6</sup>, etc. Today, it is impossible to voluntarily join an army that is at war publicly or secretly, as everybody knows, that aims at the objective of military victory with all its strategic preparations, and to believe that "one will be spared, have an easy job, etc;" the entire situation has moved far beyond that. Everybody must realize this. And it is an experience drawn from all other wars of liberation; the enemy soldiers only understand this as a result of actions of the revolutionary guerrilla. There is no other way. Rogers<sup>7</sup> has already said that the worst result of the actions against the US Army in West Europe is the loss of morale amongst the soldiers.

**Q:** *But there is still a difference between the two deaths on the Air Base and the GI. The basis for the action, as you have presented it, doesn't explain the case of the GI. Isn't this a contradiction?*

**A:** No, basically, the relationship between us and them is war. We needed his card, otherwise we could not have carried out the attack. Of course, we wouldn't say that we should now shoot every GI who comes around the corner - or that other comrades should do so. One can gain clarity by considering the actual situation, the political-practical determination of the attack; i.e., it is a tactical question.

The fact is that there are certain realities that keep the US government from intervening in Nicaragua<sup>8</sup>. One of them is an expected widening and escalation of the struggles in the whole region, which the Sandanistas, the FMLN, as well as the guerrillas in Guatemala, have clearly announced. And the other one is that they have to anticipate growing contradictions in the metropolises, above all, being confronted by intensifying resistance and attacks. They are not at all sure whether they can hold up against it. This is materially what we refer to when we talk about the increasing the synchronization of the struggles and their combined impact, which at the moment is already being objectively achieved.

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<sup>6</sup> Air-Land Battle Doctrine was adopted by the US military in 1982. It is based on the use of aggressive air attacks deep inside enemy territory, moving the site of destruction away from the frontlines themselves. While ostensibly developed in preparation for conflict with the Warsaw Pact countries, this doctrine has obvious consequences for people living in the Third World, especially non-combatants whose cities, villages and infrastructure are all potential military targets.

<sup>7</sup> General Bernard W. Rogers was Commander-in-Chief of NATO when this interview was conducted.

<sup>8</sup> Nicaragua – In 1979 a popular revolution in Nicaragua brought the left-wing *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (or Sandinistas) to power, forcing the US-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza to flee to Miami. Under the Reagan regime (1981-1989), the United States worked hard to destabilize the Sandinista regime (and this was one of the factors behind its defeat in 1990), arming and supplying right-wing mercenary armies, mining the harbour of Managua, and carrying out various covert operations. Nevertheless, the US never dared to directly invade the country.

Within all liberation struggles, the consciousness tends to develop that there is no other strategy than the development of the international revolutionary front, the wearing down of the imperialist mega-system by the process of world revolution. We perceive this very directly; it is the movement of international class war. And that is what "incredible dimensions"<sup>9</sup> means; to place oneself, on the basis of one's own situation, within this war, as part of the struggling force, and, thus, to understand oneself within the context of this war. Much of the criticism and uncertainty at this time is an expression of a distance from the reality of the war.

**Q:** *In your statement, you say that "an organization of the oppressed of the world" hijacked the TWA jetliner<sup>10</sup>. What else do you know about the struggles in Lebanon?*

**A:** Nothing for certain beyond the fact that these are anti-imperialist struggles that have an important role to play in frustrating imperialist plans for world supremacy and for fragmenting imperialism's power. There are striking differences as far as the Shiite movements are concerned. For example, Berri and parts of the Amal militia<sup>11</sup> conducted massacres in the Palestinian camps. Berri's politics are integrated into imperialist plans for the "pacification of Lebanon," and the liquidation of the armed Palestinian struggle is a condition for that. Others are fighting Zionism and imperialism jointly with Lebanese and Palestinian resistance groups. The hijackers said that they don't belong to any of the organizations that were held responsible by the media; the Islamic Jihad, Amal, and Hizbollah<sup>12</sup>. The action and the accompanying demands were politically correct and forceful. They have frustrated imperialist plans in Lebanon, dragged US imperialism and Israel into the center of the confrontation, and shown that "US imperialism is a strategic paper tiger." It is a victory for the anti-imperialist struggle that the prisoners were released, that they could not risk a military solution.

Clearly, the ideas that form the basis for the Islamic fundamentalist movements have little in common with our politics. However, one must realize the objective impact of their struggle. Besides this is a matter for the Arab revolutionary movement. What's the use of judging from here?

There is something else we want to say; in many leaflets comrades talk about an "integration of the RAF and *Action Directe*." This conveys something like an "organizational-logistical" integration that does not exist. Furthermore, there is no imposed European central command deciding upon directives or lines of action. We reject this and it is politically impossible. The West European guerrilla front can only exist as a real process. The discussion aims at a joint conception of the situation in the West European metropolises and its international significance, with the goal of political-

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<sup>9</sup> Reference to the quote at the end of the communiqué claiming responsibility for the August 8, 1985 action in Frankfurt. The quote read: "Never shrink from the incredible dimensions of your goals!"

<sup>10</sup> In June 1985, a Palestinian Commando hijacked a TWA jetliner, demanding the liberation of Palestinian prisoners held in the Middle East and West Europe, an end to Zionist attempts to set up a "security zone" in South Lebanon, an end to Zionist support for the South Lebanese Army, as well as calling for broad popular support for the liberation of Palestine.

<sup>11</sup> Nabih Berri founded the Amal Militia in Lebanon.

<sup>12</sup> Different Shiite guerrilla groups, representing diverse Islamic tendencies.

strategic unity. And, of course, whenever it is possible, joint practice. That is the goal, and all discussions are concrete and practical from the beginning. *Action Directe* and ourselves proceed from the perspective of the revolutionary process in West Europe, the necessity and the possibility of organizing and influencing the process of revolutionary upheaval here, in the context of international class war, is an authentic process resulting from the situation in the West European metropolises. Every group develops their concrete understanding of political-military action from their own process, their own conditions, and their integration in the resistance movement in their own country.

**Q:** *But there exists some rather large political and practical differences between the guerrilla groups.*

**A:** We don't use ideology to trip each other up. Whenever a discussion is desired, it is, of course, possible, if it is directed towards the goal; otherwise it is pointless. Ideological differences are of no importance as long as they don't turn into political ones. Looking at the enormous possibilities for the revolutionary process in the West European metropolises, which has as its driving force and basis, the communist guerrilla groups, we conclude that the differences and the particular conditions have no weight. The identity of goals overcomes the differences in the context the struggle.