

Smash we can!

An overview about the resistance against the NATO summit in Strasbourg and Baden-Baden

One purpose of the meeting in Strasbourg from January 16th to 18th (see http://gipfelsoli.org/NATO_2009_english/5912.html) is, apart from networking and common planning, to get a mutual knowledge of powers and weaknesses of the movements in different European countries.

For this, we translated a text that was published in a German lefty monthly newspaper and gives a summary of activities. But the text does not regard the current situation of a "non-dogmatic" radical, anarchist, autonomous left in Germany. To provide that, see this brief summary.

Many estimate the highlight of Heiligendamm to be in the common mobilisation of all spectrums, that widely accepted the different forms of action or at least didn't commented them critically. This success would not have been possible without the radical groups, that organised a substantial part of the common used infrastructure. Beside the opening demonstration on June 2nd in Rostock, the various concepts of blockading (Block G8, decentral blockades) are stored in the movements awareness and used since then successfully also in cities.

After the G8 there had been several attempts to transform this kick into continuous networking. The "Interventionist Left" is one of these projects, that tries to be a federal structure for organised radical groups. The "Perspektiventage" ("Days of perspectives"), which took place twice after Heiligendamm, addressed more towards "undogmatic groups". The last meeting was however sparsely visited. A similar approach is followed by the "Bundeskoordination Internationalismus" (exists since 1977), that tries to deepen current issues in a yearly conference.

After Heiligendamm new movements emerged or boomed. The appetite on militant actions is continuing (see <http://directactionde.blogspot.com>), black blocks on demonstrations can be seen numerously. In Berlin there is a monthly meeting of an "Autonomous Assembly". The repression, that led to raids all over the country shortly before the summit, provided the authorities an insight into the structures against the G8, but gave the mobilisation its last drive. But it didn't end with that: in July 2007 the federal police (BKA) arrested 3 men accusing them of burning military cars. Another one was pretended to be the "intellectual head" of the group and also imprisoned. Allegedly the raids before the G8 brought the police on their tracks. They are supposed to be part of the "militante gruppe" ("militant group"), that is objected to having committed dozens of militant actions. At least the solidarity work was able to popularise the idea of "Practical Antimilitarism"; an important issue for the mobilisation against NATO.

The authorities of persecution are not silent anyway. After a rearrangement, now the federal countries are responsible for the definition of "Versammlungsgesetze" (laws for rallies and demonstrations, controls also the registering of public protest). Bavaria decided 2008 an amendment, that restricts the right to protest widely. Black blocks are forbidden, just wearing black clothes can be seen as an "affirmation of militance". Also Baden-Württemberg (where the NATO summit will take place on the German side) wants to pass a similar bill quickly.

Spotlights around movements in Germany since 2007, not complete:

* In autumn 2007 and 2008 there had been vast demonstrations against the implementation of "data



retention" ("Vorratsdatenspeicherung"); 2008 with estimated 50.000 participants in Berlin (http://wiki.vorratsdatenspeicherung.de/Freedom_Not_Fear_2008). They focussed on German minister of interior Schäuble ("Stasi 2.0"), who is pushing the tightening of "inner security" on a European level.

* 2008 the first German "radical climate camp" took place in Hamburg, together with an antiracist camp. Militant actions in advance helped the camp to get an enormous echo in the mainstream media meanwhile the summer slump. The construction site of the power plant Moorburg was blocked, an airport occupied.

* Against an "anti Islam conference" in Cologne, organised by European rightwing groups and parties, an unexampled campaign took place that based on the concept of "Block G8". Hundreds of groups and individuals called for massive blockades (also decentral, building barricades). The conference was impeded (<http://hingesezt.mobi>).

* Protests against the annual "Castor-Transport" to Gorleben/ Lower Saxony (nuclear waste, transported by train from France to an "interim storage") reached a new peak in 2008. Again there had been several militant actions, such as attacking signal installations or draping "horseshoe-shaped iron bars" ("Hakenkrallen", see <http://tarnac9.noblogs.org/post/2008/12/16/hakenkrallen-howto>) over the power lines of railway tracks. French and German police are investigating now together, because also in France "horseshoe-shaped iron bars" were used to attack TGV lines. This led to investigations and arrests of "Tarnac9" (<http://tarnac9.wordpress.com>).

* On November 12th annual 100.000 pupils and students participated at education protests in 40 cities (<http://www.schulaction.org>). There had been several occupations, that were evicted brutally.

* Also in many smaller cities solidarity actions and demonstrations in support of the Greek revolt were organised. In Berlin a police station was attacked.

* In December 2008 2 policemen were acquitted in the "Oury Jalloh court case". Oury Jalloh burnt 2005 in a police cell (<http://no-racism.net/rubrik/293>). Migrants and supporters organised constantly solidarity and publicity.

Links to resistance against the NATO conference: <http://gipfelsoli.org/Home/5404.html>

Friends of dissent!, Berlin

NATO is having its birthday party – we are celebrating with them!

About the current state of mobilisation against the NATO- summit in April 2009

Something is brewing for the beginning of April: On April 2nd 2009 the G20 summit in London takes place, in the evening of the following day the Gala dinner of the NATO heads of government in Baden-Baden and on the 4th of April the NATO's 60th anniversary is celebrated. But also the opponents of capitalism and war prepare all over Europe in order to disturb and interfere with the events of the rulers and their staging of power. Spring 2009 is going to be exciting.

Already in spring 2008 first ideas developed of not letting NATO celebrate its birthday undisturbed. Buko nr 31 that took place in May 2008 (Federal Coordination for Internationalism; an annual congress of German left-wing organisations). Out of a network meeting, after the BUKO the "Bye-Bye NATO alliance" developed. Groups and people from the anti militarism and internationalism work, the autonomous left and interventionist left (IL) took part in it. Common ground was the interest in an activist campaign against the NATO- summit 2009. Point of discussion and agreement was an action conference. Last summer two more of these meetings took place in Frankfurt. There a common base for a general mobilisation and cooperation was found and set [1].

Preparations in all political spheres of NATO opponents in Germany

At the same time the traditional peace movement initiated a meetings and action conferences in Germany and Europe- wide [2]. After a stage of intensive e-Mail communications both, traditional peace movement and left wing anti- militarist groups, sat together on a meeting in September 2008 in Frankfurt/ Main. About 130 people participated. In three more meetings this alliance published a considerable call: “no to war! no to NATO!” [3] and developed common positions for the choreography of the coming events in Strasbourg. Most of the pre- existing consensus of the Bye- Bye NATO alliance was included. Until now it has only been signed by about 20 groups. Besides the national preparations there are many local and regional mobilisation preparations. For example in Berlin an anti- militaristic plenary was established in order to mobilize for Strasbourg. There is a similar project in Cologne around the group “Bundeswehr wegtreten”. Additionally in Nordrhein- Westfalen, Easter march activists are preparing a train for 1000 people to Strasbourg. Regional meetings took place in Baden- Baden and Baden- Württemberg.

International preparations

The first international meeting took place in the beginning of October in Stuttgart were 130 people from 16 countries took part. Radical left/ autonomous German groups were largely missing. An international committee was established which published a call [4] that doesn't go as far as the one from Germany. They criticize only the policies of NATO, not the institution itself. Other aspects from the German call are missing: There's not a single word of the function of NATO as an instrument of keeping and securing the power of the capitalist- world- order. There is no mention of the increasing militarization of society and the aggravation of civil-military collaboration. Instead NATO is indirectly characterized as a vehicle of the USA. Another important difference to the German version is that there's only a call for civil disobedience actions, not for blockades and encirclements.

Nevertheless, some radical left groups signed the call, just for showing the European Alliance's breadth. Until the beginning of December, 260 groups from 25 countries joined the international call. Shortly it's going to be opened for (famous) individuals. This could lead to nasty surprises, depending on the politicians/VIPs who will sign it.

The second international meeting took place in Brussels on December 1. Out of the 25 participants the majority came from Germany, the rest came from France, Britain, Italy, Spain and Belgium. Both local coordinations from Strasbourg and from Kehl were present too [5]. The majority was attac and the traditional European Peace Movement. The narrow minority consisted of War Resisters International from London, Bombspotting from Belgium, the radical left/autonomous coordination from Strasbourg and the IL. This constellation will be the future International Coordination Committee (ICC). The ICC's first project is the International Action Conference on February 14-15th in Strasbourg. The trilingual meeting will deal with the last decisions for the protest's schedule and choreography in Baden-Baden, Kehl and Strasbourg. At this point of time the discussions are about the concrete plans for the actions. The main conflict is about the actions on Saturday, 4th April. The ICC agreed that the different actions should not interfere with each other over these four days.

Planned schedule for April

On Thursday April 2nd, the G20 summit takes place in London. There, demonstrations against this summit have already been announced; at the same day, there will be actions in Baden-Baden and Strasbourg. Some of the international groups preparing the NATO protests are mobilizing for London. We hope that the actions in London will not interfere with the mobilization for Strasbourg. A British comrade formulated it this way: “On Thursday we will scatter them in London, and on Friday we will chase them with our already ordered trains to Baden-Baden and Strasbourg.”

For Friday April 3rd, actions against the foreign ministers' meeting during the afternoon and against

the NATO gala in the evening are planned. Local and regional action committees are discussing the blockades of the venues and/or the airports. All those involved, whether local, regional, national or international, agree that the gala in Baden-Baden is the opening event of the NATO summit and therefore call on participating the counter activities.

Friday afternoon, the counter congress starts in Strasbourg. Different to Colonia 1999 or Heiligendamm 2007, big NGOs dealing with global development policies that would be able to raise money, are missing. Neither the German nor the French Ministry of War is going to sponsor the counter congress. This might be a good chance for radical antimilitaristic groups to bring in their issues.

There are conflicts about the schedule of Saturday, April 4th. The main point of discussion is the “civil disobedience actions.” Generally everybody agrees with this form, but the devil is in the details. A central project is a mass demonstration from 1 pm. to 5 pm in Strasbourg downtown. This manifestation will take place in any case so everyone gets the chance to bring their protest against NATO onto the streets.

Another planned action is blockades of the venue of the summit on Saturday morning.

The representatives of the traditional peace movement in the international coordination committee as well as in the national preparation committee (ICC) see problems in this proposal, because nothing should endanger the demonstration. They want the blockades to end before the demonstration starts.

Blockades: The devil is in the details

On the last meeting of the ICC in Brussels, concerns about the schedule came up. British and French representatives of the traditional peace movement fear that the whole demonstration might be prohibited because of possible confrontations during the blockades. After some discussions (almost) everybody agreed that whether the demonstration will be prohibited or not, is a political decision taken by the state force and is neither influenced by confrontations during the demonstration nor the blockades. Only the Mouvement de la Paix wants to discuss this further. In January they will decide whether they support the blockades or not.

Whether the plans for the beginning of April can be carried out doesn't just depend on us. The opposite side in France and Germany make themselves ready as well. All in all 15.000 police officers will be provided. Regional and national media, for example Der Spiegel, has started to agitate against “violent demonstrators.” All this will be marginal if enough people come to protest against NATO, war, and crisis.

A first test of our mobilizing capacity will be the protests against the NATO security conference in Munich on February 7th.

Further informations:

<http://no-to-nato.org>

<http://natogipfel2009.blogspot.de>

<http://gipfel soli.org>

www.dazwischengehen.org

[1] www.dazwischengehen.org/de/story/2008/09/eckpunkte-des-buendnisses-bye-bye-nato

[2] The traditional peace movement's actors on the German side are: Bundesausschuss Friedensratschlag Kassel, DFG-VK, IL, VertreterInnen der LINKEN; on the French side: the Movement de la paix (close to CPF) and ligue communiste révolutionnaire; and Europe- wide: mostly the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms (IALANA).

[3] <http://notonato.wordpress.com/dokumente>

[4] <http://notonato.wordpress.com/appell>

[5] Present were the IMI, LINKE.sds, DFG-VK, DIE LINKE, attac, IALANA, IL

Based on an article in “analyse&kritik”, http://www.akweb.de/ak_s/ak534/39.htm