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Informations about and against the G8-summit | Heiligendamm | Germany

On the Way!

Something's afoot. A spectre is haunting Germany. Tips are circulating on email lists, initial meetings are taking place, info-tours are underway, action-gatherings and summer camps are being organised. Plans are being crafted and questions discussed. What can we do against them all the way out there in Heiligendamm, a tiny resort by the Baltic Sea? How can one's own cause be united with that of others? And anyway, can this really work? Right across the extra-parliamentary scene of local groups and initiatives, all the way into the Left Party/Party of Democratic Socialism (Linkspartei.PDS) and the big organisations, east and west, functionaries and grassroots activists, non-violent and militant – all of them together? Marx once said that if more than three German revolutionaries got together in one room, they'd be smashing chairs over on another's heads within no time. But times can change, even on the left.

The 2007 G8 summit will take place in Heiligendamm on the coast of the Baltic Sea, and it's encouraging to see what's already going on. What ends up happening all depends on... that which the movements themselves make possible. Can we really become hundreds of thousands? Will the opportunity be seized to send the G8 to hell in a collective spectacle of resistance? Or will the same old patterns be replicated in the drab rituals of each political milieu: all the way from the radical- to the parliamentary-left? Please, anything but that!

G8-Xtra will appear irregularly, and for free, until June 2007 and wants to help initiate dialogue between different ideas, topics and practices and to begin – if we may be so bold – to start discussing the "organisational question" of the old, the new, and the new-new left in a new form: questions of internal democracy, the visibility of different forms of politics, and of the social alternative. The newspaper is put together by the editorial collectives of existing publications, local groups, nationwide projects and lots of individuals all of whom work together within the Interventionist Left network. Amongst others, these are the editorial collectives of ak – analyse & kritik, arranca!, Fantômas and so oder so, locally active groups and organisations like the Antifascist Left Berlin (ALB), Avanti – Project Undogmatic Left (Northern Germany), Group dissident! (Marburg), For a Left-Wing Current (FeLS, Berlin), Radical Left Nuernberg, Radical Left Koeln, Unrest Foundation Koeln, but also umbrella groups such as War is Peace and Libertad!, as well as individuals from the social fora, anti-war movements and attac. We have chosen the name Interventionist Left because our concern, literally, is to intervene in the status quo. And we can only do that together. G8Xtra is a newspaper for that kind of a left movement, it is not a Party paper. This editorial has been written by the participating editorial collectives to show that we see ourselves as looking for commonality as opposed to unity, for a network of many which has yet to be created, tested and expanded by countless people. In the times of great helmsmen they used to say: praxis is the proof of truth.

The Editors

News from the Red Planet

Countdown to the G8 Summit in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

The new always enters into the world through struggle. For several years now, G8 summits have become points around which protest and resistance have crystallised. On demonstrations, in discussions in the camps, and at many of the counter-summits, hundreds of thousands of activists have expressed their collective "No!" in face of the economic and military warfare waged by global capital. The size, multiplicity, internationality and radicalism of the movements is already manifest proof of a new alternative cycle of globalisation from below.

Through street protests, blockades and direct action, the "Red Zones" of imperial power have been attacked and the G8 meetings pushed from major cities to the periphery. The images have changed. The populist adulation by the masses is now a thing of the last millennium. Since the events in Genoa, the G8 have met in inaccessible luxury hotels far away from the metropolises, behind barbed wire, protected by anti-aircraft missiles and massive police forces. And since the last summit at Gleneagles in Scotland, we can now finally be sure that the polite invitation to "sit down together and talk about it" – in this case it being the gigantic propaganda stunt of voluntary debt-forgiveness – is really just a bad joke.

Is there anything that one could really talk to Tony Blair and George W. Bush about, other than their global wars – and the consequences thereof? Is there anything that one could really talk to the EU chiefs about, other than their racist border regimes – and their consequences? The Mediterranean is today Europe's largest mass grave. Over the last few years, 15,000 people have drowned in their attempt to reach the shores of Schengen. No, the World Bank representatives will talk to the finance ministers, the G8 leaders will confer with their security ministers, they all may discuss with the IMF President and the board members of multinational corporations. They all agree on the fundamental problem. Global command has to be deepened, the power structure strengthened. No, there can be no real input from "outside" the sphere of power. Against this the movement of movements can only find its own concepts, publics and practices within which an emancipatory counter-power and rationality can be articulated in the face of capitalist madness.

Bringing Initiatives Together, Mobilising Together

In June this year, the G8 summit will take place in what used to be the palace of the Russian Tsars in St. Petersburg, and in the early summer of 2007 their travelling circus will come to

Germany when the "leaders of the world" will come to the Kempinski Grand Hotel in Heiligendamm on the coast of the Baltic Sea in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

The task ahead of us, therefore, is to begin creating the preconditions for collectively organising powerful days of resistance in Heiligendamm. Demonstrations, events, blockades, actions, discussions, music and cultural festivals ought to make clear that we will never acquiesce to the capitalist world system – anywhere.

In order for this to be possible, everybody needs to make sure that everybody is visible and can make their voice heard: from those who protested against welfare reforms, to the environmental and peace movements, trade unionists and human rights activists, from self-organised migrants to the globalisation-critical movement, and the traditional, alternative and militant currents of the left. If it can be done to make these groups and milieus – which do not together form a tight "unity", but which also do not completely isolate themselves in separate "camps" – communicate with each other, then the days of Heiligendamm can become a forum for the extra-parliamentary, emancipatory movement in which social alternatives can be tested.

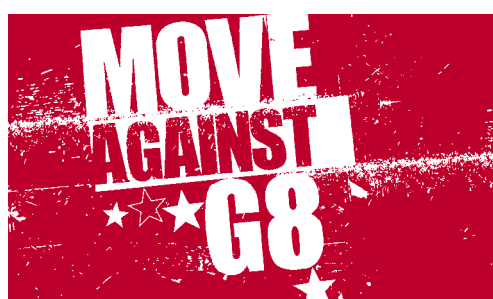
For a Left Intervention

One of the new aspects of the movement of movements is that it exists solely in and through its constituent parts. Groups and individuals constitute this movement; but not all in the same way, not through common forms of actions, protest or organisation, let alone through a common program. Of course, the essence of this movement lies not in a kind of competition – where every "Party" does its own thing and seeks to transform all the others into their foot-soldiers, or into mere spectators – but neither does it lie merely in indifferently existing side-by-side. Its essence, rather, lies in setting in motion a real social alternative: another world. An anti-capitalist, anti-imperial(ist), anti-racist, anti-patriarchal alternative. It is neither a matter of patiently negotiated common position papers, nor of a politically correct fundamental statement of the ultimate, non-vulgarised critique of capitalism. It is a matter of counter-power in movement: in the "preparation", in the mobilisation, in the moment of direct delegitimation of the imperial bloc during the G8 meeting, and of course – and especially – in the time which follows, in the maximum number of places, day-by-day.

Whether or not the intervention will be "left", or even "radical-left", will depend on whether or not it will have seized the opportunity to put this counter-power into motion.



The Mobilisation against the G8 summit in Heiligendamm kicks off.



Come to St. Petersburg · Come to Heiligendamm!

This is a call to participate in the international mobilisations against the 2006 and 2007 G8 summits and make powerful protests and resistance possible.

The mobilisation is open to all those committed to:

- A clear rejection of the G8.
- A mutual recognition of diverse forms of action and resistance.
- Demonstrating both solidarity and reliability towards others involved with the mobilisation.
- A clear and offensive distancing from both right-populist and rightwing forces.



Another World is already there!

Seattle, Genoa, Heiligendamm...

There are days during which, over the course of a few hours, a rupture occurs. November 30th 1999 was precisely such a day. In Seattle, tens of thousands blockaded the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial ensuring the breakdown of negotiations amongst the global managerial elite. Although Seattle may at first have appeared as an isolated news item, what it illustrated was that, through cooperation amongst social movements, another world could be made visible again – if only symbolically and for a few hours.

In the years preceding Seattle, not much was heard about this other world – in part because people didn't want to listen. Margaret Thatcher set the tone, declaring: "There is no alternative!" Exactly 15 years before Seattle, in 1984/85, the British Conservative Party succeeded in defeating a nationwide miners' strike. For a whole year, the strikers had resisted their assault. The eventual defeat of the strike – brought about through violence: 20,000 miners were injured; 13,000 arrested; 200 imprisoned; 2 killed; and a further 3 died gathering coal during the winter – represented the end of an epoch for the entire workers' movement. Gains which had been won through decades of struggle, from social security benefits to pension funds, were slowly whittled away and almost every nationalised industry was privatised bit by bit. Great Britain became Europe's laboratory of neoliberalism.

Breakdown and Re-emergence

In the years which followed, however, it was not only the British trade union movement that was to become a thing of the past. All around the world, the states and parties of "really existing socialism" imploded. Hard on their heels followed the collapse of the liberation movements of the Global South – both those in struggle and those already in government – and, finally, of Western social democracies. This movement of dissolution was also to affect the new social movements and every organisation of the left, including the groups and subcultures of the autonomous left. The resulting paralysis appeared complete, until its eventual shattering on that day in Seattle. It is here, not in the breakdown of the WTO negotiations, that the real significance of Seattle lies.

All of a sudden, it became clear to everyone that social movement – the Zapatistas in Chiapas, the landless movements in Brazil and India, the massive and powerful strikes which were fought out in Korea and France in the mid-1990s – had never actually ended. After Seattle came the mobilisations against the summits in Prague, Gothenburg and Genoa, followed by the world social fora and other gatherings of the social movements, on all the continents and in many countries. On February 15th 2003, millions – more than ever before on a single day – demonstrated around the world against the US war in Iraq, due to begin only a little later. Germany saw two demonstrations in which hundreds of thousands took part. The same number of people demonstrated for a whole summer against the Social Democratic/Green Party government's neoliberal "Agenda 2010". In Latin America, one neoliberal regime after another is being replaced by governments that – at least rhetorically – present themselves as part of "the other world". And even in Germany, both the neoliberal party blocs suffered defeats in the 2005 general election.

This other world of which we talk, however, is nowhere other than in this world, for the world remains nothing but that which the history of social struggles makes of it. But what is it that defines this alternative cycle of globalisation? Two things were new in Seattle and in Genoa: first, the composition of the struggles and those in struggle; and second, the communication within the struggle and the communication of struggles – the immediate, global recognition and impact of coordinated action. Trade unionists and autonomous activists, nuns and feminists, NGO functionaries and the Direct Action Network, Via Campesina peasant activists from all over the world, the Art and Revolution Collective from San Francisco, organisations of migrants from Latin America and elsewhere all demonstrated together in Seattle. It became an instant worldwide event; and for precisely this reason began a process that continued in Prague, Gothenburg, Genoa, Porto Alegre and many other places.

Herein lies the possibility of the new world that we count on – because it already exists. These new features, of course, are the product of trans-

formations within the globalised capitalist mode of production, which in turn is also related to the global extension of the networks of imperial authority – a phenomenon which is also an important aspect of the post-Seattle era: September 11th, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the threats of war against Iran.

Movement of Movements

The movement of movements which became visible for the first time in Seattle is not "the" movement and is certainly not a Party, even if parties can play a role within it. It is also not a movement for diversity as such – in other words, for difference which, in turn, creates identity. Somewhere between total unity and total difference, this movement has the capacity to give itself direction through the use of new media – of which the internet is as much a part as the social fora. But beyond the celebration of these new forms of communication, the cycle of movement since Seattle has also shown one thing: the localised disturbances of Empire, irrespective of their forms and means, can only become loci of social counterpower if the movements go beyond maintaining their largely decentralised and "spontaneous" character and the protecting of their heterogeneous strength, and move towards engaging with each other in a way which allows for effective political organisation. To reject all forms of organisation – on the basis of a false understanding of the history of the left and its defeats – and to only focus on a movement politics that cannot go beyond the individual and its identity is ultimately just as authoritarian as its opposite; namely, the assumption of each political groupuscule, initiative, or vanguardist outfit to always-already have the correct answer to the questions of social organisation of coming movements and struggles. This implies a different relationship between movement and organisation: they are not in contradiction, but neither do they form a unity. In turn, this constitutes a new challenge for the organisations that take part in the movement: there must never again be a Party which could claim to be its "parliamentary wing" or, even worse, its vanguard. Presuming that the movements can avoid defeat from within, such

attempts to capture would necessarily condemn their authors to the status of a mere sect. Or, if successful, would fundamentally change the character of the movements towards becoming that which they are not: state.

Composition of the Struggles

But the movements have also inherited a weakness from the time before Seattle. For the other world which these movements are making possible does not yet have a vocabulary with which to name and concretise its projects and its alternatives as previous movements have had: republic, democracy, socialism, communism, the free association of free individuals. The issue, however, is less the words themselves than the conflicts, confrontations and debates about alternatives; the individual and collective experiments in which alternatives can be tested in everyday life – in which there can also be a practical break with the status quo. Such breaks can even be seen in defensive struggles which, although only temporary, already constitute collective flights and passages into another world. If such a language is to be developed, then some other questions – amongst them a few old, very old, ones – have to be posed anew. Not least of which is the following: what is, actually, "left", and what is, actually, "radical-left"? Over and over again the question also has to be asked: what would make the other world into one that is not capitalist, imperial(ist), patriarchal, racist... into a world that is radically for all the many that are not one?

The hegemony of neoliberalism only began to show its first cracks in Seattle – cracks which

needed to be deepened, lengthened and branched out in all directions. This hegemony – although not without its challenges – continues to penetrate and overdetermine our everyday lives, and those of everybody, everywhere. This hegemony also yields imperial capitalist command, the global regulation of which is the subject of negotiations at G8 summits and WTO ministerials. Governments' day-to-day deployments of the means of violence and coercion also form part of this system of command: in Abu Ghraib, in Guantanamo, in Ceuta, on the German-Polish border, in Chechnya, in the US-American "war on terror" and the EU-ropcan "war on 'illegal' migration". Similarly, it implies the everyday control and disciplining of all those whose labour-power is flexibilised, made mobile and rendered precarious for an ever-decreasing price, and whose poverty and exclusion it "secures". This hegemony and control also go hand-in-hand with the spread of ethnicised and racialised ways of living and thinking, and with the roll back of gender relations. And finally, they intersect in the recent popular return to the "values" of service, hard work and duty towards ones people and fatherland.

In this sense, Seattle and Genoa have not fully arrived yet. In this sense, their promise remains a line on the horizon. In this sense, the movement of movements has yet to begin. The G8 summit that will take place in June 2007 on the coast of the Baltic Sea near Rostock is the next opportunity. It is our opportunity. Not only right there and right then, but as of now, everywhere, and far beyond Heiligendamm.



Red Skies over Paradise: Heiligendamm 2006, the Health Spa and Kempinski Grand Hotel.

The story so far...

...but so near the protests.

The mobilisation against the G8 summit on Germany's Baltic Sea has begun. In diverse groups and movements – from the radical to the parliamentary left; from the environmental, peace and anti-racist movements to the established NGOs and the Left Party/Party for Democratic Socialism (Linkspartei.PDS) – plans are being made.

At the end of March, the first Action-Conference against the summit took place in Rostock in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Meck-Pomm), organised by parts of the peace movement, attac Germany, the Interventionist Left network, as well as local groups and movements. Representatives of church, environmental and peace groups; delegates from trade union youth groups and leftwing party members; activists from attac, migrant and anti-racist groups, as well as the radical left – from the groups belonging to the Interventionist Left and Dissent!, through to the "Revolutionary Coalition Against the G8" – all took part in the conference. Representatives from last year's anti-G8 mobilisation in Scotland and this year's protests in St. Petersburg spoke at the conference. A number of focal points for the anti-G8 mobilisation crystallised during the discussion in the plenary and in the various working groups. In 2007, an international mobilisation to Heiligendamm will involve a united demonstration. Camps to provide accommodation for activists across Germany and far beyond will be prepared. Alternatives to capitalist globalisation will be discussed and openly presented at a counter-conference, and a large cultural event will take place, closely connected to the political movements. In addition, anti-racist networks took up the idea for a day of action for the rights of refugees and migrants, and the mass

blockading of the G8 summit infrastructure was discussed.

The Left Party/PDS also understand themselves as part of the worldwide movement against neoliberal globalisation. Together with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), they form the state government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. They have called for "powerful protests" and an "alternative counter-summit" in Meck-Pomm. A counter-conference is also favoured by the large German developmental and church-affiliated NGOs. Together with groups from the environmental movement, they are also considering spectacular and media-friendly actions on the streets during the summit.

A number of meetings have already been held by the so-called Dissent! Network in which primarily anarchist and autonomous groups have gathered. Some of those involved have already been travelling through Germany and numerous other European countries for several months on an Info-Tour, discussing the G8 and building momentum against the summit. The Dissent! Network are currently primarily focussing on organising a camp ("Camp-Inski", a word play on the Kempinski Hotel where the summit will be held) to take place later this year, and the protests against the summit in St. Petersburg. The idea is to support local resistance to both summits. The Dissent! Network are, in part, critical of cooperation with parties and large organisations. Parallel to Dissent!, a number of anti-imperialist, autonomous and communist groups have founded the "Revolutionary Coalition Against the G8."

The precise date of the G8 summit at the seaside resort of Heiligendamm currently remains unknown. The press are reporting that the summit, which normally takes place in summer, will be held earlier in 2007.



A clear rejection of the G8

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern before the summit

On your marks, get set, go!

Easily controlled with very few access routes and far away from the big cities, this is the perfect location for a G8 summit. For the same reasons that, in 2005, the G8 heads of state didn't meet in London but at Gleneagles in Scotland, the 2007 G8 summit – to be hosted by Germany – will not be happening in Berlin or Hamburg, but in Heiligendamm on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Heiligendamm itself has a population of around 200 and, apart from the conference centre – the chic Kempinski Hotel – there are only a few houses. Only two access roads would have to be closed off, then everything would be under control.

There is only one big city in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Meck-Pomm): Rostock. Nearly 10% of the population have left the state since 1990 and the rural population has a density of only one third of the average in Germany – a consequence of the state's catastrophic economic situation in which unemployment stands at around 20%. Under these circumstances, many of the local population view the G8 summit as an opportunity for economic development. The hope is that the summit, and its 10,000-odd participants, will bring spending-power into the region. Disappointment is already setting in amongst the locals, however, with investment so far being concentrated on access roads to the conference centre, rather than the widespread development of local infrastructure.

Local Activity

Initiatives and coalitions – from trade unions to anti-fascist groups – are already getting active against the G8 and involved in nationwide networking processes. If the national and international mobilisation against the summit is planned and implemented whilst working closely with local activists – and if the connections between capitalist globalisation, the G8, and the precarious social situation that many of Meck-Pomm's residents find themselves in are made clear – then the police and local government will not be able to bank on there being little support for the protests from the local population.

The police are already preparing themselves for a huge operation in the early summer of 2007. The Head of Police in Rostock, Knut Abramowski, has been heading the operation since January 1st 2006. Surveillance has increased around the Kempinski Hotel, and anyone walking in the area considered to be potentially "disruptive" is being watched. Several people have already been banned from the area.

The state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is governed by a coalition between the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Left Party/PDS. On the one hand, the Left Party have passed a number of clear resolutions to actively participate in the summit protests and to form coalitions with other political groups and movements. On the other, however, the question of their "ability to govern" is at stake and they share responsibility for both financing and policing the summit.

Showing the Nazis the Door

Federal state elections are due to be held in Meck-Pomm on September 17th 2006 and there is a possibility that the Nationalist Party of Germany (NPD) may enter the parliament in Schwerin, the regional capital of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The NPD already scored an above average election victory of 3.5% in the 2005 general election and, according to a survey from 2003, up to 30% of the population of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern potentially hold far-right attitudes.

In Meck-Pomm, the NPD and other far-right groups and networks frequently deploy anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation rhetoric, potentially posing a significant challenge to the campaign against the G8 summit. It will not be sufficient to simply keep Nazis away from the demonstrations, events and actions against the summit; we also need to clearly define our own politics. Neoliberalism and capitalist globalisation, in other words, cannot be opposed with nationalist parochialism and racist exclusion, but with the opposite: international solidarity and a globalisation from below.



Summit Protests Yesterday and Today

Activists Report

Genoa and Seattle were successful summit mobilisations that have long since found their way into the collective memory of the globalisation-critical movement. But both before and after these events, there have been protests and resistance when the powerful of the world have met. Groups and individuals who are today active in the Interventionist Left (IL) network were amongst those who participated in these protests – sometimes with more, and sometimes with less success. Here we speak to some of them – Pedram Shahyar of the attac Coordination Committee; the authors' collective SehStörung who, in an earlier incarnation, were active against the World Economic Summit in Munich in 1992; Rainer Schmidt, today of the Cologne Radical-Left; the Anti-fascist Left Berlin (ALB); and the FeLS (For a Left-Wing Current) International Solidarity Working Group – and compile some of their experiences, motivations and conclusions.

World Economic Summit Munich 1992

In the run up to the summit, quite a few people think that the only thing that can be achieved in Munich is a good beating and arrest. Although the freedom to act of the around 20,000 participants in the days of action is limited by massive state repression, they none-the-less manage to articulate their protest against seemingly victorious capitalism. The part of the left tending politically towards the NGOs and the Greens withdraws from the mobilisation and distances itself from the internationalist mass demonstration by staging a simultaneous "alternative summit."

The second Gulf War happened a year ago. Bush Senior announces the "new world order," the bourgeois press rant about "the end of history." Why was there no nationwide coalition of all political tendencies, and how did the mobilisation nonetheless take place?

Author's collective SehStörung: At this time, at a national level, many of the NGOs close to the Green Party were too far removed from us politically. At the beginning of the mobilisation in 1991, this moderate current attempted to divide the mobilisation by demanding a clear distancing from radical-left groups, and in return suggested that there may be a pot of money available for financing activities. This attempt at a bribe was rejected by the entire Munich Coalition – from

peace groups to trade unions, to the autonomous groups and the nationwide radical-left structures. A strong local coalition, a nationwide radical-left anti-WES meeting, and a strong autonomous, anti-patriarchal feminist organisation were ultimately responsible for the success on the streets and in the counter-conference.

A number of initiatives had been engaged in an ongoing discussion around a re-definition of an internationalist (and interventionist) left in the metropolises ever since the IMF meeting in Berlin in 1988. Two realisations were important: firstly, that no left current could, after the defeat of so many liberation projects in the so-called "Third World", as well as in the metropolises, just continue doing the same old thing; and secondly, that a new left project required an international discussion and an open process. And for this, everybody needed to know which side of the barricade they were on: a broad coalition needs solidarity in its multiplicity against every form of divide-and-rule tactics and criminalisation. This solidarity was expressed in a common response to repression and through the presence of activists from all over the world on the streets and at the '500 Years of Colonialism and Resistance' conference. This is how the Libertad! initiative was created, and it is no coincidence that the broad Coalition 2002 [translator's note: against the NATO conference in Munich] with the motto: 'From Genoa to Munich: Capitalist Globalisation and the Global War of the NATO State are Two Sides of the Same Coin...' began with protests against the so-called "Security Conference".

EU and G7 Summits Cologne 1999

At the beginning of June in 1999, the EU summit meets in Cologne. Some 50,000 people demonstrate against it. Two weeks later, and also in Cologne, the last G7 World Economic Summit of the past century takes place. 30,000 people form a human chain in an action organised by churches and NGOs. The left Coalition Cologne 1999 only manages to bring 10,000 demonstrators into the streets.

The Social Democratic/Green Party government has been in power for one year but the protests in Cologne remain small. Why was the mobilisation against the G7 a failure?

Reiner Schmidt: If you subtract the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) supporters who used

the demonstration for a solidarity protest with their recently jailed leader, Öcalan, from the number of participants, then the coalition only managed to bring some 4-5,000 into the streets. This was in spite of the support provided by various nationwide organisations, from the BUKO (Federal Coordination for Internationalism) and the BUND (German Federation for Environmental Protection), all the way to the Jusos (the youth wing of the Social Democratic Party), and not insubstantial financial means.

What happened was what always happens when a centralist project goes wrong and acts merely on an abstract or official level, failing to develop a clear and unique profile. Everybody is a part of it, but nobody really wants to do anything. The Coalition Cologne 1999 developed a politically "correct", but not very exciting, collection of demands through a draining round of horse-trading to achieve consensus. Even though, at the last moment, there was an attempt to turn the tide with the new slogan "Stop the War!", the effect of this was comparatively weak in the face of the government's campaign selling the war in Kosovo as a humanitarian action. The nationwide radical-left coalition was irrevocably divided internally and largely paralysed. The part of the coalition that was still active organised activities against the EU summit but did not mobilise against the G7. Some of the Coalition Cologne 1999 were also keener to organise against the EU summit alongside the EuroMarch network.

Why did you, as anti-fascists, participate in the mobilisation against the EU summit in Cologne?

Anti-fascist left Berlin (ALB): 1999 – that was a long time ago. That's when we were still in the AAB (Anti-fascist Action Berlin) and organised in the AA/BO (Anti-fascist Action/Nationwide Organisation). Back then we organised for an international anti-fascist bloc with an anti-capitalist orientation under the slogan "Fight Fortress Europe", and initiated a coordination meeting at which we talked about the situation of the (anti-fascist) left in different European countries. For us, that was the beginning of the internationalisation of the Antifa. It was part of our political concept, of attempting to be visible beyond the radical-left, to participate in the demonstrations organised by the coalition. In the run up to the EU summit we were present at ▶▶



No Room for Resistance: Reserved for G8 Supporters.

NO
AL G8

SI
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CAMBIO
FUNDAMENTAL



→ both radical-left and Coalition gatherings. The respective problems of summit preparations within the different political milieus seems to have remained pretty much the same until today. While, for the radical-left, it was typical to accuse and distance oneself from each other, the work in the coalition was, on the face of it, generally more constructive, but it remained a lot of work to build fair cooperation beyond the "violence debate."

G8 Evian 2003

In rural Evian, unlike in Genoa 2001, the mobilisation is not towards an attack on the high security zones, but rather aims to use a "Seattle-style tactic": that of the flexible and wide ranging. A number of camps serve as focal points for the protests. In addition, demonstrations are happening in Geneva against the World Trade Organisation Headquarters and the "migration management" of the IOM (International Organisation for Migration).

Attac Germany organised a special train to Evian. How did the cooperation between the younger activists who had been politicised through Genoa and the older "political" activists from the NGOs work? Could Evian build politically on the Genoa mobilisation?

Pedram Shahyar: No. Genoa had a different dimension both with regards to numbers of people and the level of confrontation with the Red Zone. But Genoa, and immediately afterwards the 11th September, were a turning point for the summit protests because it was not at all clear whether the summits of the global elite would continue to be surrounded by global civil society. That is why Evian was so important for us. German participation was maybe not quantitatively higher than in Genoa, but the train allowed for a different type of summit protest. Some 1,500 people from Germany spent a week together in the Intergalactic Village, where in the last night before the protest around 10,000 people from all over Europe met. This collective frame, and the preparation which had been done, created the space for many people with very little experience in demonstrations to join the blockades.

The cooperation between different generations and currents was, in this particular case, not very complicated. The camp attracted mainly younger people. Political cooperation in the village was also pretty uncomplicated. The split had occurred before. The people from the VAAAG (Alternative, Anti-capitalist and Anti-war Village) did not want to work together with attac. That was a real pity. But since it could not be avoided, we planned our own blockade. The politics of our camp were not very complicated: there were radical leftists (especially the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League)) and the Greens from France, Giovanni Communisti (Young Communists)

from Italy and attac from Germany. All of them had, in advance, agreed to mass, non-violent civil disobedience.

G8 Gleneagles 2005

The Iraq War, Live8 and the official summit's attempt to present a desire for debt-forgiveness to the media, along with the bomb attacks in London, are the key issues here. A very broad movement demonstrates for total debt relief and Dissent! attempts to distance itself from the Labour- and Trotskyist-oriented mainstream left.

How did the radical-left mobilisation against the G8 in Gleneagles deal with the Make Poverty History campaign? Which experiences from Gleneagles can be useful for Heiligendamm?

Fels-InterSol (For a Left-Wing Current – International Solidarity Working Group): We travelled to Scotland as a small group from Fels and it was kind of both – success and failure. It depends on your perspective: we can almost get a little misty-eyed when we think back to the camp in Stirling, which we lovingly called "hippy-ville." 5,000 people met here and constructed not only the camp's infrastructure with impressive speed, but also planned the daily meetings and common actions. We also have positive memories of the morning road blockades, the Clowns, the storming of the Red Zone right by the G8 Hotel, and the TRAPESE info-tour.

At the same time, we criticise the isolation of the different protest milieus. For example, G8-Alternatives organised a big counter-summit and parallel to this, on the same day, the discussions of the Dissent! network took place. Why don't we find common places for discussions? Why were left positions totally invisible on the Make Poverty History march? And why didn't all left currents organise the main day of action together? Why were there so few attempts to better coordinate media work?

Six years after Genoa, it will be high time to fill the by now ritualised summit protests with new ideas. We want actions that are neither easily recuperated nor ignored. Aside from our participation in the official protests, we, as Fels, want to focus on the topic of migration. At the same time, as part of IL, we want to make clear: we will pull off the protest together. We are looking to engage with all critical forces left of social democracy, and want to have influence as early as possible in the formation of coalitions, so that we are not once again dominated, like in Scotland, by a campaign supportive of the government. And it is also important for us that we not only focus on the external perspective, but just as much on direct action and determined protest that energises lots of people, is fun, and strengthens us for further political work.

Summit Protests in Russian

The St. Petersburg Summit will not be forgotten

When, from 15th to 17th July this year, the heads of state of the eight most powerful industrialised nations come together in St. Petersburg, the conditions for protest and resistance at first seem quite unique.

First of all, despite playing host to the summit, Russia is not a full member of the G8. That Russia was granted entry into the club of the powerful at all has less to do with its economic strength than with its function as an important supplier of energy and as a geo-strategic partner. To date, Russian influence on G8 policy remains small. It is for this reason that the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, is using this summer's G8 meeting not only to polish Russia's image as a supplier of raw materials, but also to give added weight to his demands for full G8 membership. Since the role of Russia in the G8 will always also be in the foreground at the meeting in St. Petersburg, the Russian elite is placing a lot of emphasis on projecting a positive image abroad.

Secondly, anti-summit protesters in Russia are confronted with new constellations of state-managed protests, and forms of defamation that have their roots in specifically Russian forms of politics. Following the model of the "Naschi", a "democratic anti-fascist youth movement" created by the Kremlin, the Russian elite are trying to create an anti-globalist mobilisation to accompany the summit in July with demonstrations. The idea, however, is that they never go beyond displaying a consistent loyalty towards the Russian state. The image presented to the outside should be: whoever opposes the President is a nutter, a job, an outsider, everything but an anti-globalist. These measures will, most likely, determine the media representation of events around the summit.

Other protest actors expected in St. Petersburg come from the milieu surrounding the first Russian Social Forum. In the summer of last year, almost the entire left, including members of the Communist Party of Russia and anarchist groups, participated in the Forum. The anarchists have been mobilising for a while against this year's G8 summit and have already invited people to participate in the protests through a number of call outs and recently at an international preparatory meeting in Kiev.

Activists from Belarus, Estonia, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Germany and Great Britain participated in the Kiev meeting and planned the days of action against the summit. According to the protest "road map" developed there, the anti-authoritarian protests will probably begin in Moscow, attempting to forge links in the run-up to the days of action in St. Petersburg, and to debate together the upcoming actions. In St. Petersburg itself, there will be a big action on July 15th.

But despite the fact that the protest against this year's G8 summit will face a number of challenges, due to the specificity of the Russian context, a lot of groups and initiatives from Germany have responded to the Call Out and are participating in the 2006 protests. The reason being: the summit protests in Russia are another opportunity to network and act together with left forces from Eastern Europe. The idea is to build upon links formed during the protests in Prague against the World Bank/IMF meeting in 2000, broadening the basis for international cooperation. For some young Russian activists in particular, the protests against the G8 are their first encounter with international protests. In the same way as every summit protest always generates new perspectives and new ideas, St. Pe-

tersburg can become another important experience in international cooperation. Through their actions, the Russian activists keep on showing that protest is possible in Russia, albeit under more restrictive conditions. International participation is not only a sign of solidarity but also an important expression of practical support for local activists.

Both the anarchist scene and migrant groups in St. Petersburg have been repeatedly attacked by Nazis who have also been known to cooperate with state security forces. Migrants groups, in particular, have demonstrated several times against the attacks and murders. Every bit of support from abroad will create more public debate and hence safer conditions in which this state of affairs can be countered. The greater the number of people who take to the streets in St. Petersburg, the more resistance to the Nazis is possible.

As the Call Out from the Russian "Networks Against G8" explains, the idea is to show the G8 that wherever they go, they will be met with protests. In 2006, once again, the motto of the summit protest will be, "We Are Everywhere!"

A Global Day of Action is planned for July 14th in as many cities as possible, in order that the protest against the G8 does not only take place in Russia, but also receives broad international support. On this day, we need to show solidarity with the demonstrators in Russia against the G8 and the structures of domination of which it is part. Following the themes of the 2006 G8 summit, our day of action will demand free health care and education for all, and an end to the nuclear age and war.

The power of the elites knows no limits, but our solidarity is limitless too: *join the protest against the 2006 G8 summit!*



On the Frontline: Resisting the 2005 G8 summit at Gleneagles in Scotland.

what's already
happening
against the
G8 summit

infos · contacts · dates

A new website about the mobilisation against the G8 summit in Heiligendamm has been set up by a group within the Interventionist Left (IL). Resources produced by IL groups and activists, along with interviews, background texts and updates are available at: www.g8-2007.de. Email contact can be made with the IL via: info@g8-2007.de

The website set up by Gipfelsoli Infogruppe (the Summit-Solidarity Info-Group), at <http://gipfelsoli.org>, after the 2001 G8 summit in Italy, is one of the places in which most information about summit mobilisations can be found. In particular, it contains a number of interesting texts about the continuing persecution of activists and trials in Italy following Genoa. Forthcoming dates for the anti-G8 Info-Tour can also be found here.

The first large preparatory meetings of different groups belonging to the radical left have already taken place: in Hamburg in the Autumn of 2005, and in Berlin and Leipzig in early 2006. With the

majority coming from Dissent! and Peoples' Global Action, these meetings – each of which had several hundred participants – were strong expressions of interest in an early networking and actions. Further meetings are planned during the BuKo 29 conference in Berlin in May 2006. Activist groups are welcome to come and get involved in this network. Email: g8-2007@riseup.net

From 25th-28th May, the BUKO (Federal Coordination for Internationalism) Conference, with the theme of "Control", will take place in Berlin. A more detailed description of the topics to be discussed at the conference – which include: the G8; the state and security; migration and colonialism; and energy – can be found at: <http://www.buko.info/kongress/buko29/buko29.html>.

Peoples' Global Action (PGA) have set up a German language webpage about the G8 in Heiligendamm: <http://nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/g82007>

The Dissent! Network, originally formed in response to the 2005 G8 summit at Gleneagles, also

have a German language page: <http://de.dissent.org.uk/>

A wiki has been created by the networks that met in Hamburg, Berlin and Leipzig. It is online at: <http://wiki.de.dissent.org.uk/> and can be used as a working platform for groups focussing on different aspects of the mobilisation. It is open to anyone who wants to participate in the preparatory process for the protests against the coming G8 summits. The emphasis is upon Heiligendamm, but there is also information about the 2006 G8 summit to be held in St. Petersburg in Russia.

More about the 2006 G8 summit in St. Petersburg is also available at: <http://g8-2006.plentyfact.net>.

On 14th July 2006, a Global Day of Action is planned in support of the protests in Russia.

During the 2007 summit, there will definitely be some action in the countryside around Heiligendamm. www.links-lang.de is the right place to look for news, facts and information for action

in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Here you can already find (in German) a nice and long list of news stories about the summit and the preparations in Meck-Pomm. Check out the stories under the heading 'Im Mittelpunkt der Welt stehen' ("To be at the centre of the world"): www.links-lang.de/g8/02.php

The anti-racist No Border networks, together with local migrant and refugee groups, are planning a day of action against the 2007 summit under the mottoes: "Freedom of Movement" and "Equal Rights." More information can be found at <http://nolager.de>, or feel free to e-mail no_lager@yahoo.de.

An international camp, "Camp-Inski" (a word play on Kempinski Hotel where the 2007 G8 summit will be held), will take place from 4th-13th August 2006 in Heiligendamm near the Baltic Sea. The Motto of the camp will be: "For Global Social Rights and an Entirely Different Entirety." See <http://camp06.org/> or email info@camp06.org.