First International Coordinating Committee (ICC) “No to war – No to NATO”
Meeting, 1 December 2008, Brussels

Present: Reiner Braun (IALANA, Kooperation für den Frieden), Arielle Denis (MdIP), Helmuth Boder (Friedensnetz Baden-Württemberg, Baden Baden group), Chris Nineham (stop the War Coalition), Kate Hudson (CND), Hugo Braun (Attac Europe), Frederic (Strasbourg), Colin Archer (IPB), Christine Buchholz (Die Linke), Christiane Reymann (European Left Party), Rene Jokisch (Buero Tobias Pflueger), Jordi (Barcelona), Hans Lammerant (Bombspotting, No bases network), Tim Bogarts (Pax Christi Vlandern/International), Kristian Golla (Netzwerk Friedenskooperative), Monty Schaedel (DFG-VK), Attac France, Julia (Freiburg, Die Linke-SDS, groups near Strasbourg/Kehl), Tobias Pflueger (MEP), Reiner Schmidt (Interventionist Left) Arielle Denise (Mouvement de la Paix), Helmut Woda (Friedensnetz BaWü), Frédéric Henry (Attac France), Lysiane Rolet (Attac France), Colin Archer (International Peace Buro), Speck Andreas (War Resister’s International), Sophie Zafari (FSU), M. Kaisers (RdZR, coord. Strasbourg Dissent, France), Thomas (No Pasaran France, Dissent, France), Lisa Clark (Blessed are the Peace Makers).

1. Location: Strasbourg – Kehl – Baden Baden

Change since last meeting:
Meeting of Foreign Ministers and Ministers of Defence, Friday afternoon in Baden Baden
Dinner of heads of government Friday evening in Baden Baden

Reiner reports that there will be actions Friday evening in Baden Baden.

Report from Baden Baden group: last Thursday there was a founding meeting of a coalition with about 30 people.

Chris Nineham reports that Gordon Brown announced on Thursday that the G20 will now meet on 2 April in London. StW and CND have called a protest at the event (G20) and are actively looking for partners. They are committed to have a protest on Thursday in London, and go on coaches to Strasbourg on Friday morning.
Organising meeting on 15 January planned.

Attac Europe and Germany is now focusing on new actions and common actions. Attac Europe decided to be present in London on 2 April. They are a bit doubtful now what could be the main event.
Reiner sees this as a chance for an opening action in London on the 2 April; we should send speakers and greetings to London.

Christine: ideas about the politics. She thinks there are two things to consider: it happens in times of a financial crisis, and for the first time Obama will come to Europe. We have to be clear about the links between the two events, and what the implications for our mobilisation will be. The profile of the conference should be adopted.

Colin Archer asks if there is already an agreed political message for the protest.

Chris Nineham says that the initially the message is that this meeting is an opportunity to break with the policies of war and destruction.

Slogans: Troops out of Iraq – yes we can! Troops out of Afghanistan – yes we can!

Reiner Braun articulates the problem that NATO is a tool not only for war, but for mediation and stresses that crisis and war are two sides of the same coin, and we have to bring this together. It is definitely necessary to put a lot of pressure on the new US government.

Colin Archer says that maybe we have to adjust our message, using the “Yes we can!” rhetoric, that we can help the USA to become an ex-imperialist power.

Kate Hudson agrees with that for the G20 mobilisation, but she thinks the clear “No” is necessary for the NATO protests.

2. Signatures under the call and next steps

There are now about 142 signaturies. But Reiner yesterday received more than 80 signatories from Greece, with a lot of trade unions. In total there are up to now 240 signatures, but we don't have all NATO countries, so we need help getting in contact with some of the NATO countries:
- Romania
- Bulgaria
- Lithuania
- Estonia

Common parallel press conferences in the second half of January to present the call, the signatures and the actions as common plan.

WRI to chase Peace Action Macedonia, groups in Serbia, Georgia, eastern Europe, USA, Greece (CO group), Turkey.
Tobias asked in his group in the European Parliament. He got a lot of signatures from individual MEPs, but he asks if it is OK for political parties to sign the call. He thinks it will be possible to get more signatures from different parties that form the GUE/NGL.

Kate suggests to change the deadline to February.

Colin suggests not to close the door.

Arielle suggests to also add individual signatures.

Reiner Braun asks if we should open the list to individuals to sign the appeal.

Reiner Schmitdt is opposed, as it might depend on which individual signs, i.e. if Oskar Lafontaine would sign that would people off.

Christine is also in favour, doing it with two separate lists.

Arielle proposes the meeting of NATO defence ministers on 2 December to use this to do a common press statement. She proposes to collect individual signatures on the website only. That would not mix it with personalities nationally.

Reiner Braun summarises that we need the appeal in min. two more languages (russian and turkish) and that we continue to collect signatures from organisations. We open the appeal to individual signatories, but have two categories (organisations, individuals).

To put all signatories on the website until the end of the year.

Reiner Braun thinks that it will be a good year to launch the appeal in the first week of February, 5 February 2009, in a common European wide press conference in Brussels, Madrid, Germany, London, Paris. Others are asked to do the same.

Reiner Braun proposes a press release in relation to the meeting of NATO ministers of foreign affairs.

The team will be Arielle Denis, Kate Hudson, Tobias Pflueger for Brussels 2 December.

Andreas comments that for the press conferences in February it will be important that in the press conferences all different spectrums are present and subsidiary principle should be the guideline.

3. Different events
Reiner Braun gives an overview of his impression of the events:

1. International resistance camps 1-5 April
2. Demonstration, Strasbourg, 4 April 1pm
3. Civil disobedience, direct actions? Friday and Saturday
4. International conference: Thursday evening, Friday ... until when? Saturday evening.
   Friday evening actions in Baden Baden
5. Conference or other discussion will continue on Sunday.

Hans reports on the discussions from Offenburg. The idea is to start with mass blockades on Saturday morning.
Friday in Baden Baden is still an open question.

Tobias on the logic of the different events: Police is preparing for “a lot of chaos”, making a lot of stupid statements in the media. There will be 15,000 German police, possibly the same on the French side. Therefore we need a very disciplined programme, and no open doors.
He shares the experience from the Munich conference, where the police catches people at the end of the demonstration. So we should stay together after the demonstration, turning it into a manifestation/rally/conference. He is therefore in favour of the proposal to have blockades on Saturday morning. There should also be a conference on Sunday morning.

Kate agrees with Tobias. But she asks about the character of the blockades, and how that might impact the demonstration.

Chris agrees with Tobias' outline. There is a massive logic having a mass demonstration after the civil disobedience. This makes it much safer than having it afterwards. In regards to Kate's concern, he thinks it can work, as it did at the G8 in Geneva. But it will require careful coordination, as the police might use this to block coaches getting into Strasbourg.
He also thinks that the climax for the counter conference should be on the Sunday. The majority of people from the UK will come for Saturday and Sunday only.

Helmut Woda wants to add that we should serve different interests.

Julia wants to answer add that the idea of blockades on Saturday morning was not an idea of Hans, but of a meeting on 28-29 November in Offenburg. The rationale was that the morning of Saturday is the only time when they would make an impact on the NATO summit. A big action on Friday in Baden Baden will be problematic, as it causes a lot of logistical problems.

Andreas fills in on the days of action Wednesday and Thursday.
Hans comments on the coordination, which will be difficult, as many things are not yet clear. On the nature of the blockades, he has the examples of Heiligendamm with groups doing their own actions. He says that it will not be an easy process to bring all the groups together.

Christine tries to imagine what the mobilisation will be for all the days. Some will be there from Wednesday on, but most will be there only for the weekend. Most who will give the movement its breadth will only come for the weekend. Therefore we need to take the weekend very serious. In the German coordination there is a disagreement about the days of the conference. We need to close the whole protests together, and some things did not work well in Heiligendamm. She thinks it is a good idea to have something to go to on Saturday evening and also Sunday morning. She thinks the reasons for the direct actions on Saturday morning make sense, but her question is how to make sure that we do not blockade ourselves, busses arriving from far away during the entire morning. One answer could be setting a time limit for the direct action.

Reiner Schmidt thinks whether or not the police will call off the demonstration is a political decision, and does not depend on the behaviour of the activists. Because of that Saturday is the day of action, and not a day where some people discuss while others are imprisoned or kept encircled by police. He said that at the Offenburg meeting the encircleing of the NATO congress in the evening has not been ruled out. On the nature of the blockades. They will be resisting, but they are not an attack. They are a form of passive resistance.

Sofie thinks is not so easy to manage all the choreography. Some of the organisations supporting the appeal do not support the civil disobedience and direct action. There might be different kinds of direct actions. Her main interest is the demonstration and the counter-conference. She thinks it not so easy for all organisations to support all of this.

Marina thinks in Heiligendamm the biggest problem was not coordination, but how some people did then distance themselves from part of the actions.

Arielle says that for the French coalition the objective is not to stop the NATO summit, but to defeat NATO politically. This is a long-term work. We know that there will be a lot of police in Strasbourg, so we need to get a lot of people to come. We have to be very clear what we are inviting them too. This is mainly the demonstration, which is the main event. And we also want to educate them on alternative security. She adds that in the French political culture, they are not very
familiar with other forms of actions, so maybe they need to learn. Therefore she thinks why not have the biggest civil disobedience actions in Baden Baden, so that it does not have an effect on the demonstration in Strasbourg. If in the morning something happens, then the result may be that we are not allowed to demonstrate.

Colin refers to the word culture, which should happen as part of a rally on Saturday evening. This could create a different mood. Otherwise tensions might rise, and it might lead to trouble.

Reiner Braun thinks that we have to accept that there are different strategic options and different political understanding how we can achieve change. Taking that into account, he sees the following possibility for a common agreement:

**Sunday:** some event, i.e. a peace assembly. How do we want to continue from here on. We need to have the last words.

**Saturday night:** no discussion element on Saturday night. We do not know what is going to happen. It should be open for discussion possibilities in a big hall, where we can discuss and/or have a party.

**Saturday:** having in mind that many people will come on Saturday mainly for demonstration — which should not be destroyed by the police and other activities. Part of this is that the Baden Wuerttemberg Easter March next year will be a week earlier over the bridge Kehl-Strasbourg.

Regarding the civil disobedience actions, he can understand that this has to be on Saturday morning. To do this, we have to arrange a group will deals with the coordination and makes sure it does not have a negative impact on the other events. The conference: he prefers it as a block on Thursday and Friday, starting Thursday evening and ending Friday afternoon. It needs to have some relations to the actions in Baden Baden, so that it is possible to join the actions in Baden Baden, as this is the opening of the NATO summit.

Cultural activities are up to now not included in the activities.

He thinks that we have to clarify the relations between the different actions on Saturday.

**Julia:** we have decided in the past that all elements (civil disobedience, demonstration, camps, conference) are a common thing, because they include all different spectrums. We cannot change that now. She thinks we can manage that there is no bad interference between the blockades and the demonstration, but this needs to be organised. The image she wants is a good blockade in the morning. Then a good demonstration, including the people from the blockades. And afterwards some kind of debates. And if
there are problems (i.e. arrests), then this could be used to deal with this and raise awareness.

Hans shares his experience with NATO - Game over. There they can organise it completely nonviolent. But then they were the only ones organising something. Here we are dealing with a coalition, and the idea to exclude something here cannot work. They will not be stopped because we don't want them to do so. If we do not accept that, then we will have trouble. So we have to find a way to deal with each other, giving everyone space in the protests, so that we don't fight each other.

Christine agrees with Reiner that we have accept the different strategic approaches. The Saturday will be different. She thinks that it is important for those coming only for the weekend, and they have to have some political content, with some high profile speakers. This is important. Her fear is that the division will be bigger when we don't have anything for everyone here. Her question is what the G20 on the 2 April will mean for the conference.

Jordi suggests to learn from the social forums, and maybe to have something like this on Thursday and Friday, and maybe also something on Saturday and Sunday morning. He thinks our work is more the communication, and the media work, and the demonstration.

Tobias thinks it makes no sense to try to convince others about our political strategy. We should try to make agreements what we do together, and for him this includes all four parts of the protests. He wants to have everyone around the table as part of the protests. He is in favour of direct actions, as he thinks the political confrontation is necessary. But he thinks it does not make sense at the end. The idea of a concert was interesting, but it can probably not be organised. He thought of a small manifestation why we stand against NATO, and this will then be our political message. Concretely we need agreement that direct actions have their place, and that the demonstration is not used for something that some of the participants of the demonstration don't want to do. The timetable is therefore important. NVDA Friday and Saturday morning, but nothing else during the demonstration. For the conference he thinks it will be good to have it on Thursday and Friday morning, and also on Sunday morning a clear political message.

Reiner Schmidt: he wants a clear distinction between the blockades and demonstration, which for him too is the most important aspect. But there is a strong movement in favour of civil disobedience. We should try to maintain an influence on these, and we can only do that when we take part in that.
We need to make clear the distinction between blockades and the demonstration, i.e. the blockades from 10am until 1pm, and then people join the demonstration.

Kate thinks it will be wrong to counterpose a mass demonstration and direct action, and we have all agreed that all aspects will be included. She was earlier only referring to the choreography. And from the experience in Britain sometimes having a variety of actions is often the most successful.

On the blockades, she thinks they probably have to start earlier.

On Saturday, we should have a political rally at the end of the demonstration, and that's where we can make statements on problems with the police.

On Saturday evening, if we are lots of people, we cannot organise an event for everyone, especially as they will be quite diverse. There is no point thinking of one thing for everyone.

Personally she thinks a peace assembly on Sunday morning is something she doesn't like. This might be difficult, better would be some kind of conference.

We should consider having the conference primarily on Friday and Sunday.

Sofie wants to clarify that she doesn't want to oppose anything, but we have to understand, that some people do not support all the direct actions. She does not want to denounce anything. She thinks the violence will not be from us, but there will be violence from the police. She emphasized the need to manage the end of the day. In France, repression and police violence is getting worse and worse.

Chris agrees with Sofie. He thinks the problem in Genoa was that there wasn't anything at the end of the demonstration. On Sunday, we should have the culmination of the conference.

Thomas: about the blockades and the demonstration. We agree to diversity of tactics. To solve this problem, we are concentrating a lot on the timing. But we don't speak about the location. We all have to share Strasbourg at the same time. Maybe there is the option to do things at different locations. In the past (Prague, Seattle) there has often been a division of location.

Frederic reminds us that there will be 47 heads of governments and 3,000 delegation members in Strasbourg. Strasbourg will be a military city. The first challenge will be to win the challenge that we are going to demonstrate. One of the problems is that there are different local coalitions coordinating, which both are in contact with the authorities.
If people here know about contact with the authorities, they should say so here.
I.e. the question of the camps. What is going on with the camps? Who is going to discuss with the authorities in the name of who and what?

Hugo (Attac) says his organisation has to rethink the schedule of its participation, as on Thursday they will not be able to participate in the conference on Thursday, as they will be in London. Without any political debate and meeting their participation will not make sense. The main action for them will be the demonstration, and it should be secured that this demonstration will not be disturbed by other activities.

Arielle shares the concerns very much.

Reiner Braun tries to summarise and proposes:
- conference and political debates on Friday, Saturday evening (how is open), Sunday morning. The conference group will prepare different parts of the events.
- The main action on Saturday is the international demonstration, which will start at 1 am
- There will be civil disobedience in the morning of the day. There should not be an overlap between these two. How this will be organised in details depends on the schedule of the official meeting. A small group will be formed to work out the details. Both events are very important for the whole actions over the weekend. Small group: Julia, Frederic (Frederic.Henry@wanadoo.fr), Reiner Schmidt (schmidttitus@gmx.net) or Andreas Vogler, Hans Lammerant, Andreas Speck

Arielle says that she is not sure that the French coalition will agree with civil disobedience on the Saturday morning. She has to discuss with her colleagues in France if they agree on that.

Andreas says that the small group on the blockades should meet before the discussion of the French coalition, as this group should address the concerns/problems before.

Reiner now comes to the conference. The first attempt to form a group failed. There is now a new group. Ideas to be sent to Reiner Braun by 4 December 2008. Then Reiner and Christine will do a first draft.

Andreas clarifies that on Friday there might be actions in parallel to the conference.

Julia reports on discussion about camps. Their idea now is to have one big camp in Strasbourg, and infopoints in Kehl and Baden Baden, where people can stay in an emergency. There is
the problem of money, as such a camp needs to be pre-financed, at latest in January. The camp had tried to get money from foundations, but all of them turned them down. She asks how this can be managed, and if the International Committee can support the camp. She estimates that 70,000 Euro are needed in advance.

4. International Activist Conference
Reiner introduces the draft agenda for the conference.

Marina reports that the Offenburg meeting discussed the agenda, and that the general feeling was that it was too short. The present agenda gives the impression that it is not really a working conference, or an acclamation conference.

Hans supports this.

Arielle suggests that on Saturday in the morning the working groups finalise their work.

Reiner says that the reason to start at 1pm is to reduce the costs for everyone, as it only requires one night.

Frederic reports that they have many problems finding a place. The authorities do not want to take a position against NATO – answer in next two weeks.

Andreas points out that political balance is important for the critique of NATO, but also for the facilitation of the different sessions.

Chris thinks that it's good to have more speakers in the opening. He is concerned about the length of the session on Saturday, and thinks this might be shortened.

Reiner Schmidt thinks that an Activist Conference is a working conference, there is some political input important. But then it is up to working groups. It would then be good that each working group gives a presentation, that also solves the problem of political representation. He agrees with the beginning of working groups Saturday morning.

Reiner Braun tries to summarise:
- more space for discussion in working groups.
- Have a session on mobilisation.
- Status of preparation should be given by people from the working groups.
- Different spectrums responsible for sharing and different working groups.

Arielle and Reiner to rework the agenda.
International Coordination Committee meeting on Friday, 13 February, 2pm – 7pm

5. Finances
We got so far 10,000 EUR from the German Left Party, 8,000 – 10,000 EUR from the European Left, and 5,000 EUR from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. (25,000 EUR).

Christine says that we all have to take responsibility. But that there also needs to be an appeal for the camp for donations.

Andreas states that the camps are part of the 4 activities – and we should try to help financing – and a cash flow budget should be made.

Reiner says that the next step will be to ask the supporting organisations to contribute some money, but we cannot exclude organisations that cannot pay.

6. Public outreach
a) Logo: after comments, a committee is formed: Kristian Golla, Jordi, Chris Nineham, Andreas Vogel (IL) The next draft is needed in two weeks.

b) poster
c) flyer

Ask the working group to work out a logo proposal. Telephone conference on Friday, 19 December, 6pm German time (5pm UK time). Circulate proposal beforehand.

7. Press work
Reiner suggests to now asks for contacts in different countries, and the press group should meet in Strasbourg. Until then it should be handled by the national coalitions. He does not see a need to establish a press group earlier then February.

Tobias says there might be a need to establish a group that is responsible for contact with the authorities in Strasbourg. At the moment the other side can bring issues to the media, but we don't have anyone to respond.

Marina explains that there is a press group for the radical left spectrum, with lists of journalists.

Reiner summarises that press work should in the following weeks mainly be done on the national level. There is a preliminary press group, which has been established for the NATO foreign minister meeting tomorrow. The press strategy will be discussed in Strasbourg, first in the ICC, then in the Activist Conference.
8. NATO at the World Social Forum
An event has been registered with several organisations by Justicia y Pau.

Hans reports that there is also an event by the No Bases network.

9. Negotiations with the authorities in Strasbourg
Someone from Dieux Rivs raises the issue of the problems between the two groups in Strasbourg. They have heard that the other group already has an appointment with the authorities. Frederic responds that first of all the group on actions has to discuss on the activities, and then they can go together to the authorities.
The meeting on 18 December is not yet to discuss about the route of the demonstration. We can then discuss about the camps, the demonstration, and other practical issues. We must go quickly to establish contact, but slowly.

Arielle says that in an earlier email Frederic has asked for help. She wants to know what help they need concretely.

Frederic responds that is about very practical things, i.e. once the demonstration is being organised, we need stewards, etc...
Secondly, he is not sure that all local organisations will respect the decisions of national or international bodies.

Reiner Braun suggests that for the next meeting Frederic should put on a paper what they expect from the ICC.

Frederic also says that we need to have a common political basis. Surely the police will provoke during the demonstration.

Tobias offers to be present at the meeting with the authorities in Strasbourg on 18 December, as he is in Strasbourg anyway. He mentions a paper written by Juergen Wagner.

Andreas to set up an email list for the ICC: Christine.Buchholz@web.de,

Next meeting: 12 January 2009, Paris, 11.00am – 7.00pm

Taken by Rene Jokisch

Minutes of the anti-NATO International Coordinating Committee
Brussels Monday 1st December 2008

1. It was agreed that Arielle and Reiner should chair.
2. Participants introduced themselves.
3. Discussion about location. NATO will no longer go to Kehl. Instead they will go to Baden-Baden (BB) on Friday afternoon and evening. There is likely to be action on the Friday evening in BB organised by regional peace committees and other social movements.

G20. Noted that the G20 is meeting in London on 2nd April. Stop the War Coalition (STW) and CND are calling a demonstration. It was agreed that actions in London should be supported. The meeting takes place in eth context of financial crisis and a visit from Obama. It was noted that the statement for mobilising for the G20 will be brief and simple. It is necessary to draw the G20 and NATO events together - perhaps via war and neo-liberalism being two sides of the same coin. Noted that a positive enabling slogan would be helpful for G20 such as '...yes we can.'

4. Signatures to the call and next steps. 240 signatures so far, but not from all NATO countries so far. Agreed to pursue signatories until early February, to accommodate WSF and party mechanisms, then press release/conference of appeal signatories and common actions in a number of capitals - e.g. Brussels, Madrid, London, Berlin or Munich, Paris on 5th February. Agreed to focus on getting more signatories especially in un-represented countries. Proposed to translate appeal into other languages to help mobilisation e.g. Turkish and Russian. Face book can be used for mobilisation. It was noted there was a possibility of adding individuals to appeal signatories. Agreed to have two categories on appeal: organisations and individuals. It was agreed to respect national subsidiarity and representativeness of profile at press conferences etc.

5. Timetable of events

There was a general discussion on timing of events, considering the following possibilities:

1-5th April Camp
4th April Demo 1pm
Conference Thursday/Friday/Sunday?
3/4th Direct Action
3rd evening actions in BB

There was a discussion on when Direct Action should take place and it was noted that not everyone will wish to participate in all events. Agreed that they should not be timed to conflict with other items of activity. There was a suggestion of music at the end of the demo on the Saturday. A Peace Assembly was proposed for the Sunday morning. It was also noted that a march from Baden-Wurttemberg would reach Strasbourg during the events.

It was agreed that it was necessary to have a group to liaise between the different actions planned.

There was also discussion about the nature of the Saturday evening event/concert/political event. It was agreed that the demo should conclude with a political rally.

There was also discussion about contact with the authorities to make sure there is coordination vis a vis discussions. It was agreed that the Conference should take place Friday, Saturday evening and Sunday, given that Thursday is the G20 demo in London. It was also agreed that the demo should take place at 1pm on the Saturday and civil disobedience in the morning. There shall be no overlap.

Taken by Kate Hudsen