

subordinated to the capitalist market and to competition.
Mark: this is nonsense.

Transpi: auch Transparent = Banner: approx. 3-6 meter (10 - 20 feet) of cloth, painted with political postulations, slogans or deliberate spoonerisms. Often practical to find one's group again, to screen others from view and to keep the cops from boldly running through the demo. Sometimes padded/strengthened by thick ropes or tires.

VoKü: Auch Volzküche, Bevölkerungsküche = Peoples Kitchen: Activists, who are cooking. In general help is most welcome. Food is given out for donations.

Wechsel der Klamotten = Change of Clothes: A change of clothes is always reasonable if your clothes are wet through by a water thrower or contaminated with pepper-spray or color marking by the cops. A change of clothes or a second layer of clothes are very helpful to alter your own appearance if the situation demands it.

Zivi: (auch: Z.-Bulle, Zivfte, Zifte) = Undercover Cops: Police in civilian, in this case more or less inconspicuous streetware. Nowadays in parts really authentic, which means hard to identify. Infiltrate demonstrations and trace, in some cases targeted and insistently, particular "suspects". The best instruments against Undercover Cops are groups who know each other, sometimes also a => Change of Clothes.



together

booklet to form affinity groups



copy@left

**Hello Everybody,
Dear all,**

Why do we provide you with an affinity group booklet?

We don't know if you have in your context or in your country similar experiences like we have identified in our context in Germany. We have recently got the impression that at demonstrations and other political events there were quiet a few people on their own without a group or friends. There seems to be these people have only little information, for example, it seems that they don't know our legal support structure (EA - Ermittlungsausschuss see glossary), or they aimlessly run around and do often run away in panic.

We don't know whether you have similar experiences but we ask as what we can do to improve this situation. Our idea was to prepare a booklet with reports about experiences that we requested from our friends and some political acting groups. Our intention with this booklet is to prompt political activists and participants in demonstration and action to form affinity groups.

Our motto: "Achieve More Together - Form affinity Groups" received a huge echo. First there were different voices: What do you mean by: Form affinity groups? We do this, that is clear, why should we discuss it? Others greeted the idea: We urgently need it especially in regard to the G8 summit!

We dared to work on a booklet that obviously doesn't answer all questions but hopefully will start a controversy and fruitful discussion. We hope this booklet encourages to think about doing more together and to form affinity groups.

jects (legal and pirate, spontaneous), there are internet portals, picture archives, video projects and so on. See e.g. (incomplete): www.indymedia.org; www.freie-radios.net; www.freie-radios.de; www.kanalb.org; www.inforiot.de; www.nadir.org

Runde ("Lass uns 'ne R. machen...") = Decision Circle

("Let's have a Decision Circle..."): A Decision Circle is the core of, depending, quick or slow decision making. Whether it is about your leaflet or about how to get over the police line, it's always the same principle: Everyone has one's say. Variations: Emotions-circle ("How are you?") the thumbs-circle, if it has to be fast. Similar: Spotlight.

Sanis: auch: Demo-S., autonome Sanität =

Autonomous Paramedics: Injuries are common on demonstrations. In this case regular emergency medical services/hospitals are not to be trusted, because they often cooperate with the cops and the law. Our autonomous paramedics attend demonstrations in plain clothes and are prepared to take care of injuries. If you need help: shout! (Nevertheless you should carry needed medicine, water and first aid kit, it would not be amiss)

Spitzel = Snitch: Not to be confused with comrades, who are older than 35 or/and dress different from "the scene". So be careful with suspicions. Snitches are used by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (domestic secret service) and State Security (political cops) to explore, prevent and more importantly to persecute political activities, which don't orient towards the system. Partly they "spontaneously" sit in an open preparation meeting, which is planing an action, they also take part in actions, then again they systematicaly join political groups for years and decades. No reason for paranoia, but think about with whom to do which action.

t.i.n.a.: "There is no alternative." Neoliberal maxim denying the possibility that social circumstances are created. According to the t.i.n.a.-principle every decision has to be

Europe or the capitalist command beside a anticipatory distanciation from riots and rioters. Let's pause for a moment: Why are e.g. Deportations and brutal cops all-right - therefore no violence-, resolute action against deportation or brutal cops on the other hand violence, and therefore not allright? Maybe someone can explain it to us, we don't get it.

Handy: Mobiltelefone = Mobile Phones: Practical, but dangerous as well. Mobiles can be located by the cops or even be used for mobile wiretapping, even if it's turned off. Consider where you really need it and where it should not go. Sometimes the good old walkie-talkie is the better choice.

Heli: von Helikopter, Hubschrauber = Helicopter.

Annoying. Take portraits of you from great heights e.g. at a demonstration. Sometimes you see and hear it, but Infrared Imaging also works from extreme heights, so that you don't necessarily notice them e.g. at conflicts in forests and meadows (as in and around Heiligendamm).

Infoladen = Infoshop: There are infoshops in many cities/regions. Less of a shop but more of a selforganized room, where you can equip yourself with informations of all kind, papers, leaflets, books, bustickets, t-shirts, see www.infoladen.net

Konsens = Consensus: Opposite of dissent and in the best case the result of a => Decision Circle: Everybody fully agrees to what is written, published, don or not don. Everybody.

Lauti / Lautsprecherwagen = Sound Truck: amplifies music or speech, often target of attacks, therefore protected by one or two lines of people - if not, you can organize it's protection spontaneously, just ask at the sound truck.

Medienprojekte = Media Projects: There are a lot of very different leftwing, self organised Media Projects: old and young, glossy and misprint, exciting and boring. There are papers and magazines (legal and illegalized), radio pro-

Form affinity Groups - Achieve More Together!

We were and we are organised in different affinity groups und we are not speaking with one voice. We haven't got a definition what exactly an infinity group is and how it should act, we only point out some ideas how it could be organised and what should be taken in consideration to our point of view. In your context you might identify that your group has a different explanation and would like to act differently.

We tried to point out most of the thoughts and ideas that crossed our minds and were discussed among us and we would like to suggest to form infinity groups, to act with others if it is possible in a hierarchy free environment. There are no over all working recipes or regulations and we know that this booklet can only be a beginning. Your actions, your plans and your positions are your decision. What are you doing where you are participating in you should decide together. In our opinion an infinity group is a good basis to be politically active together.

But, as we have not always the same opinions, we hope, that a lot of you can find suggestions and give us your criticism!

This booklet is for rummage, reading, leafing and not a textbook to work in from one chapter to the other - because this doesn't work.

In the international context we would like to ask you for your experiences in your context, in your country and we are very glad when you send us your opinions:

bezuggruppenreader@web.de

Furthermore you can find a file (pdf) for printing this booklet in German and English: www.gipfelsoli.org

We wish you a lot of fun, we see us in Heiligendamm or somewhere else "on the barricades".

Your " Zusammen mehr erreichen" (Achieve More Together) - editorial group

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TO FORM GANGS
Introduction - an attempt

In the early summer of 2007 thousands of demonstrators are going to travel to Heiligendamm in Mecklenburg - Western Pomerania - to demonstrate against the G8 summit which takes place there. The G8 represent a system of authorities with an enormous destructiveness; that's why we think it is appropriate to protest and offer resistance against this focal point. The G8 represent the global capitalist market, they represent politics ending in ecological disasters sooner or later; they represent an imperialistic commandship meaning war and the destruction of livelihood for many people.

But we don't want to say that criticism of G8 automatically has to result in dreary scenarios with catastrophes. Quite the contrary, one would have to caution against an overstatement and an overestimation of the power of the G8. For us, this is a question of the perspective. We think,

GLOSSARY

Alkohol = Alcohol: A. has no place on demonstrations and actions. See also: Drugs

EA oder Ermittlungsausschuss = Fact-Finding Committee: Trustworthy and experienced people, who mainly see after arrestees and get attorneys for them. Whoever gets arrested should therefore contact the EA. (Persons released after an arrest should get back to the EA immediately) At activities, there is often an EA whose phone number is spread by mouth or handbill.

Deli, also: Delegierten-Treffen, D.-Treffen = Spokescouncil: One or two spokes represent their affinity group, to coordinate and decide within a bigger context (block on a demonstration, action group, camp). Only works if there is also discussion within the affinity group.

Drogen = Drugs: have no place on demonstrations and actions. See also Alcohol are not right

Flugi = Leaflet: Also: Flugblatt, Flugschrift. Contains the recent analysis, always important and highly interesting.

Fotos/Filme = Photos/Video: Even if it often looks different. The meaning of a demonstration/action is not to film and/or photograph each other. Videos/photos can bring others in real danger. If you still want to take pictures, e.g. at the camp, always ask for the permission of the people who's pictures you are taking. (By the way: If you are interested in documentation of protests and resistance, your dedication is definitely better of in a leftwing => media project than in your private album.) The opposite side is taking pictures as well, and not a few. Sometimes helpful is a => change of clothes.

Gewalt = Violence: The question whether the state should have the monopoly on "legitimate Violence" is a controversial subject since ages.

Fact is, that the popular "discussion about violence" tends to leave out the structural violence e.g. of the fortress

tion. Watch out that your friend doesn't feel unsupported!

- Good therapists can help. With a broken leg you would go see a doctor as well... A trauma is a psychological injury. The therapist should be experienced with trauma-work and respect your political motivations.
- Also for you as the supporter this is a difficult time. Remember that it will be over one day. Take care and be good to yourself. Talk to someone about how YOU feel too.

It is time to deal with it - not alone, not in privacy, but together as a movement in solidarity!

More info: www.outofaction.net
www.activist-trauma.net
 Contact: traumasupport@riseup.net



we need less theory on how the work-process of the G8, structures of authorities, the capitalism, the racist and sexist 'normality' functions. What we need rather is a theory on the vulnerability of these structures of authorities; we need a theory and an exercise assuming that our point of criticism is something we may abolish, respectively change.

How does this work? We are living in a society that systematically consolidates and institutionalises the segregation: the capitalist commandship isolates people, divides them from their working product, determines what is to be produced and when the alarm clock rings for everyone in the morning. The racist and sexist 'normality' divides in German and non-German, in man and woman. This results in a world where people judge people due to certain ascriptions, where people have identities like ears and a nose, so to speak 'by nature'. Opposing this fixed / rigid world, left criticism refers to a possibility of change, asks not to accept this rules, to crash the system where the game takes place - theoretically as well as practically. This means e.g. to disapprove the neo-liberal principle called t.i.n.a. - 'There is no alternative', to unmask it as a cheap and boring trick, to unmask the inherent necessity of rivalry and competition as a bad joke and to unmask the fixed world of identity and division as a construct, or even more as blockheaded and inhuman.

You might ask now: 'This is just rock within the head, what does it mean exactly? How do we concretely fight against this fixed world of authority and standardisation?' The only answer that came to our mind and makes sense, is the following: We take matters into our own hands. We arrange the relationships among ourselves in another way than what suggests the social normality. We battle against

categories like 'gender' or 'nation'. We develop our own norms. Or, at least we will try that.

This isn't simple at all. For example, we don't orientate ourselves on the requirement of 'achievement'. We develop our own rhythm, our own time to do things: writing leaflets, concocting campaigns, preparing activities and so on. If sometimes discussions take a lot of time for that because everyone has to say something: this isn't non-productive but necessary. Even with this little example there is a permanent fight, a permanent presence of the social normality: 'Vote now, immediately!' someone says then. 'This point is only marginal, let's turn to the next point of discussion! We don't have enough time to consider XY now...!'

The process, the discussion, during which we negotiate the relationships among ourselves, may also be the core of fusions / groups (besides the fact, that they are always quite convenient for demonstrations and activities) this is finally the subject of the present booklet: reference groups. To express it in a simple way, reference groups are the result of a process, during which people join not to accept the 'reality', but to become active against anything: G8 summit, racist laws, national socialists / Nazis, transports of nuclear waste, whatever. If one bases one's thoughts on the disgust and on the criticism on all the rascalities, finally, one returns again to the 'great whole', to the fixed world of categories as capital, state, gender and so on.

It isn't possible to manage the overcoming of authority and power in a single 'big step', it's further impossible to delegate it to technocrats and functionaries or even to political parties, as it's always suggested to us. When the question of social liberation is concerned, it remains the

rience or that reminds one of it, building up distance to the experience etc.

3. Hyper vigilance

Sleeplessness, irritability, emotional outbursts, outbursts of rage, anxiety, panic, inability to concentrate etc.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT OTHERS IN YOUR AFFINITY GROUP

- Don't wait until you're being asked for help, just be there for them. Don't give up, even if you feel you are facing a brick wall
- The days directly after the experience are especially important for talking, after this period people often 'shut down'
- Maybe you are not sure how to react. Inform yourself about trauma to gain a better understanding of possible reactions. Just trying to be 'normal' without pitying or being obtrusive can help a lot. At the same time try to be tolerant with the reactions. The most important thing is that your friends feel safe when they are around you.
- Traumatized people often isolate themselves and have Difficulties to ask for help. They don't want pity but understanding, no obtrusive help but empathy.
- Remember that people may appear fine at first with symptoms only developing later
- Be a good listener. Avoid speaking too soon, too long and too much. We often tend to give advice instead of really listening
- Lack of support can reinforce the reaction and lead to 'secondary traumatization'. (It is obvious that you get treated bad by the perpetrators, but if you have the impression that your friends are not there for you, your whole world collapses) This secondary traumatization can be even more serious than the traumatizing situa-

This text was written by the Trauma Support Group.

OUT OF ACTION - EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Who is Out of Action?

Our group is part of the anti-repression structures and the international Activist Trauma Support network. It is our goal to provide information about versatile and partly long term psychological effects of repression and thus help prevent them. In addition we want to offer emotional first aid at political protests (e.g. during the G8 summit in Heiligendamm).

You don't need to have experienced heavy violence to come to see us, we are there if you're feeling bad (for whatever reasons) or just need a calm place to relax. Physical wounds often get a lot of attention, but psychological ones need just as much care. Even witnessing violence can cause trauma.

Often people with psychological problems are stigmatized as 'weak'. But these experiences are not a private issue. A well functioning affinity group that consciously deals with feelings like fear, powerlessness, helplessness, panic etc is the best prevention.

POSSIBLE REACTIONS AFTER A TRAUMA

The following three 'phases' can appear in random order, all at once or some of them don't appear at all:

1. Re-experiencing the experience

Nightmares, flashbacks, intrusive (repeatedly returning) memories, the feeling that the experience won't let go of you etc.

2. Avoidance, suppression

Loss of memory, increased alcohol/drug consumption, self-isolation, avoidance of anything connected to the expe-

fact: 'We must do it ourselves!' Let's oppose the first blok-headed and secondly wrong assumption that history has come to an end and every man is the architect of his own fortune with a lively 'Together we're insufferable!' Form gangs. That might be a good start.

A recipe for 5-16 people or: "Is there a construction kit for affinity groups?"

Some suggestions for "forming" an affinity group.

This chapter centres on the question "How can you find a group?". For example, if you want to go to the G8-meeting in Heiligendamm, you could look around in your circle of friends who else is going. If you know others, it would be a good idea to meet and exchange ideas. In order to find out whether you fit as a group, you should check why you want to go there, what your ideas are and what everyone would like to do there. If you find out at the meetings, that you have different ideas - for example, one says "I want to join the demonstration" and another one "I would like to organise the camp structure" - well, that's not the best starting point. But that doesn't mean that it wouldn't work out at all. Perhaps you can still get together and develop a concept with which everyone can go along. At this point it could be a good idea to ask yourselves: "Why do I want to do this and not that?". Thereby you might change your point of view and become more open to try out something else.

However, luckily there is not "the way" how an affinity group starts. Many affinity groups started from flat sharing or from open political contexts. But also it could be a circle of friends - pupils who know each other, students who realise that they are always on the same demonstrations anyway, or or or...

Prepare yourselves

Once you reached a point like "cool, that sounds good, let's just try it", it's good to meet regularly. How often, that's certainly your affair. It could be somewhat between meeting-once-a-week and taking-two-weekends-off-in-the-forefront-of-your-action. It depends on what you want to do and how well you know each other. However, it's definitely better to meet more often than afterwards to feel like "we didn't have time to talk about...".

Talking about talking... now we got to the most important "tool" - it's not a concrete one, though - Talking and Listening. This sounds pretty banal and, somehow, it is banal. Most groups we know start their meeting with a round "how am I feeling right now / 'emo round' (emotional round)" (see glossary: Round). This means just a short round about how everyone is feeling personally. You don't have to say something, but this can be a space within the meeting to tell why you are in a good or in a bad mood, what problems you still carry about with you from the last meeting, or just something you want to tell everybody. After this, it is easier to understand why xy is getting angry so quickly in the discussion, or why xx thinks everything is easy, because it's working out well for xx at the moment anyway.

Talking with each other - how?

To use the tool "Talking and Listening" properly, most people still need a lot of practice. Everyone has a voice and can somehow listen, but normally some can talk well (sometimes even without saying anything) and others understand only what they like to hear. This sounds pretty negative - we don't want to say that you are like that. But everyone has learnt certain social roles: in school, as a child, in relationships with friends or at work. This is not "unchangeable" - it is part of our utopia that we grow as people within groups and develop mutually. In order to

How many felt lonely, misunderstood and dreamt on the sly - dreamt of a single-flat, to hole up?
Where are the times, we just could live for the moment?
Not to have still lots of to do's, when we go to bed. Stress and overload evoke aspiration. An aspiration for life without pressure. Pressure obliged by us selves. Each of us.

Rapid stripes? - Little efforts?

We want to gain for something, get one's act together. But the perspective to the little and elusive efforts is obstructed. Its them, that tickle through our hands, seem to be taken for granted, but are really admirable.

We can only stop that pressure, if we announce it, make it an issue and ask for support. This implies as well the knowing smile for the neighbour, being sensitive and being able to listen to someone else. To produce stress, pressure or overload is fatally in this context. In the real meaning of this word, it's fatally to the politgang. Sudden death of the politgang XYZ, because we did not care for each other needs, the capability to keep pace with each other and the will to get the success. That consciousness that the journey and the goal of the journey is really important. Sure, we still will have to discuss the goals for nights, but at least, this is the journey.

But if everything is subject of the goals, if we have to subordinate ourselves, our needs and our dreams, our collectivity under the pressure to reach the goals- is this really the thing we long for? The idea we are struggling for?

If we come to the decision to struggle, work, live and love in collectivity, then we can cope the exorbitant pretensions, expectations and pressures.

But we have to have a common utopia!

CASTOR? What is the goal? Revolution of Society? Revolution of the System? Spoken generally in adjusting attitude? Answers to this giant question are ten a penny. These possible answers trickle through our hands like drier sand.

They are quite intangible. But they give us hints, which direction we would like to follow. The journey is the reward. But where does this journey lead us?

Together we have the Power - We are winning!
Collectivity needs the on-going debate of all, who are sharing, with regards to all of our "Anti's", the on-going debate seems the way of life.

For example we are having an anti-sexist attitude or an anti-capitalistic attitude and we have many precise conceptions, what does this mean to us. What is our conception of a "well-going, free life"? The debates and plenaries are often laborious and stony, there are often discussions lasting for hours, which seems to be without any impact at all to make matters worse. It can madden yourself: we eventually want to gain something, we want to be capable of acting.

There are volleys of reproaches, the obstructionists are to find easy: "Why do you obstruct our debate with all of your fears and sorrows? Don't you know, that the G8 have skeletons in their closet? Why didn't you come to the plenary? Why didn't you join the demo? For heavens sake, you didn't copy the flyers? Why didn't you kick the pigs shin? Why? Why? Why?"

There is lots to do. Life isn't all beer and skittles, everything is on fire, everywhere we are in great demand.

Who wonders being under pressure, even in snuggling politgangs or in house co-ops.

How many went into pieces already because of this pressure?

do so, we have to become aware of our social roles - The important topic here is speech and language behaviour. It's good to spend some thoughts on this. "Where does xy always interrupt somebody else? / How do we get everybody talking? / Why am I always talking so long? / Why does xx always reply to everything?". This topic is very complex and has many sides. But it's a good idea to agree on "basics" like: not to interrupt anybody, and/or let everybody have a say on controversial topics. Even nonverbal comments, like nodding when you agree on something or reading/doing something else while somebody is talking, are ways of dominating and taking space for oneself and such taking it away from others.

Procedure of the meetings

How you organise your meetings is entirely up to you. You'll find out how much structure you need. Whether you can work without an agenda or moderator depends on the size of the group and on what you want to do - but it's a good idea to experiment a bit on this. In affinity groups it is, from our point of view, important to reach decisions in consensus. This doesn't mean that you have to discuss everything down to the last detail and that everybody agrees on everything. Within the affinity group a major part should be agreed upon and everybody should consent to this. If someone says "No" and uses his/her power of veto, the others have to listen, and a way has to be found to continue. However, to start making decisions by majority is the end of equal participation in an affinity group. There is more on decision-making-processes later in this booklet.

A small addition: often people in affinity groups talk about women's quota / men's quota. What shall we say? As often, we don't have a solution, but come up with some questions: How is the group characterised, when it is a group

solely consisting of men or of women? Why should a woman join a group of men or a man a group of women? If everybody is fine with it, why not? But despite big goals we know how exhausting and nerve consuming this is for the respective "minority".

four affinity groups - No Cadre Organisation at all

At the beginning 90ies people were convinced, that incalculably direct action would be the best way to protest against nuclear power plants and other stuff. This happened also in our nice little town/city and a group, lets name it 'netter unkomplizierter Haufen' (which means something like 'nice little pack') arised. Usually the problem was, that even if you are pretty determined to stop atomic waste transports, there is a lack of some crucially needed things like a car, enough people, experience, money or even a good idea. But not so for the 'nice little pack'. The good point about the 'nice little pack' was, that it consists of about 25 people with different backgrounds. Some had venturous ideas and sprded them to friends, and they spread them again....NLP was perfect for what we wanted to do.

The action planned was complicated, and due to the fact that atomic waste is transported on the railways also pretty dangerous.

Many different jobs had to be adopted: some people were responsible for a red herring, some for press contacts or communication with the cops (which unluckily appeared from time to time), some had to supervise the whole action, some had to actually do the action and some had to take care of these ones, feed them with candies, and so on.

All this led in the end to a process in which all the people involved spend lots of time with each other by preparing stuff, discussing and working together.

A particular direct action, to concoct a plan seems to work as functional linking. To realize this plan, born as a fix idea sometimes ago, joins together a group very closely, the conceivability to carry out this particular direct action even more.

But what's next, if this damned fixed plan worked out really, isn't there some kind of emptiness? Feelings of loneliness? Palsy? "What on earth can we really achieve?" - seems to be the poser.

And think of all these direct actions "ended in failure"? These, which were not really successful to stop CASTOR, these wich were not really successful to block the slip road to the G8s summits for hours, these, which were not really successful to tear down all the walls of deportation centres. All these well concocted and longtime prepared ideas and plans, fizzled out in the woods? Did the group joining fizzling out? Were all these committed activists, gone by the wind? Did they take refuge in the smokescreens of new groups? Were these groups then successfully? The direct action not in the head letters of the next mornings journals, was it senseless?

The Young, the Beauty and the Successful Ones?

We should not measure the succes and the power of direct actions only if they were felicitous.

For example, which real impact has got a direct action, which was scheduled, planned and prepared by a single person, which is then the commander of his/hers companion@s. It might be even more effective, the prospect of success might be much bigger, but to be honest, what does "success" mean to us in our context?

Sure, we gain for something, want our efforts not to fizzle out. But how can this be figured out? If it was possible to demolish the clinks's walls? If it was possible to stop the

to sportive, from autonome to punk, they have adjusted their repertoire to all of our outfits. In result before I start to discuss things with my friends or group, I look around for people standing around and whose ears might prick. But do not forget that there are always people who are new, only have few information or who are insecure. Not everybody who stands around rather unmotivated belongs to state security!

AFTER THE ACTIVITIES

Most people have the need to talk about their experiences, either because they experienced a very nasty police operation (see "traumatization") or because the action went so well and smart. When the actions are over, it is nobody's business, who planned it and who participated in it. That does not mean that you should not talk about it but take care with whom you talk about what and where you do it, i. e. do not discuss it via phone (see glossary: Mobile phone/ cell phone).

Pressure to perform: The journey is the reward.

+++ *her lies buried: politgang XYZ.*+++
+++*Gone into pieces by their own demands.*++++

Wich importance has/have my politgang(s) to me? A peer group and friends to snuggle on? The "Red Cells" on their way to revolution? As many members in a group as many different motivations, dreams, wishes and demands will exist in one group. How on earth should these individualized bunch find their common sense?

For sure, there will be a common idea or line of attack, maybe something like a consensus on direct actions. To say it clear, an idea to act together. Not to collapse in debates about the common sense, is already the first obstacle to vault.

From my point of view this is in the same way important than the action itself. The performance of this process is a very important thing for a affinity group.

The 'nice little pack' met biweekly, sometimes more. Some people involved knew each other for years and some didn't know each other at all. Some participated in political movements for years, some gained their first experience there.

For sure you can't negate this differences, but it should not led to a seperation in cadres and infantry. Everyone in the group has to be responsible for integrating each other. I think that worked pretty well for the 'nice little pack'. Even for me, being new in this context, i didn't feel bad to ask questions. People didn't behave bossy or dominated discussions and you hadn't pretend to be cool. If that doesn't work the action failes as well, because you adopt the same structures you want to overcome. Our politics and actions should not reproduce the oppressing structures we live in, but built something new which empowers all of us.

In this regard the 'nice little pack' was very important for me: It was OUR action, so it was also MINE. Afterwards we evaluated everything through and through, which was kind of funny but was connected to the whole action as well. We apprehended this as a process, which enables us to learn from each other, work together an develop new insights. This was not limited through laws or stupid categories like class or gender or whatever. Also this gathering is revolutionary, an everyday revolution, but with a great impact.

A Squad or a polit action group? - report on my experiences !

Late Summer. An Email in my Inbox, speaking from

coming occasions- the next CASTOR transport. And another one replying and inviting to a meeting of the polit action group to plan the actions.

Two weeks later - the meeting. Big "Hello" and hugs on all sides. We did not see us for months. Happy to see each other. Incentive is superabound to stop the CASTOR this time for real. Last year we were quite successful....., but these year we will be...! Without hesitation we bluster forth our ideas. One after the other circles in our round as keen as mustard to make a big action. Lots of laughs, lots to be nuts. But we cannot really adhere to one proposal. Once we have one idea, we have also the scepticism to realize it, provisos to do so. Nothing really striking to us. No idea is to touch the consensus.

But last but not least we favour one proposal and starting to discuss it in-depth. Seems to be actable and the first delegation goes to Wendland, "plan-checking". Coming back we decide to meet spontaneously. We are so curious to listen to their outcomes. But they are more or less sobered. New doubts, new scepticism rises in a part of the group. F. drops out of the group. he feels stressed in his job, wishes us good success. It feels like pour water was dropped on us. But we want to act. Now we came so far, time is beating as well, just a few weeks left, until it coasts.

The train we want hardly to stop. We meet again, after some time, challenging all and everything. it was not able to met decision. Half a week later another meeting. Two very ambiguous to act, prevail. The others are less incentive now, but they decide to stick to the plan for a start. Second Wendland trip. The outcome is similarly sobered. Growing scepticism in all of the group. But there is again a call: "But now we came so far, placed so much emphasize in this idea, we just could not start again from the scratch. Plus, there is no more time left." We

just stand around or intervene. A determined group can achieve quiet a lot, even if there is no guarantee. At the same time there is no guarantee not to be beaten up by coppers or be arrested, no matter where you are.

Stay Calm

However: Panic is very common, therefore it can help if an infinity group acts calm and considerate. If the infinity group keeps cool and does not participate in the general panic and running away in hectic - even though this is sometimes necessary...You might try it; you have the advantage to be together with people you know and with whom you were able to arrange something before the possible events. There is no "always working" success-guaranteed recipe for those situations!

Conclusion

There is always more to say on this topic. Some remarks we received from others referred to the police informers that usually come along in such actions. That is certainly so and we do not want to push it aside, but this should not completely block you from acting. Infinity groups should grow to become a team, and when get you know each other better, if you're learning about each others' every day life and you trust each other, you should discuss once more with whom and what kind of activities you want to do. In case you want to learn more and in detail about police informers: Mohr/ Viehmann "Spitzel", 2004, Assoziation A, or have a look in an information store "Infoladen" (see glossary).

ACTUALLY, WHO IS STANDING NEXT TO ME...?

Undercover agents, police detectives in civil clothing, police contact persons...they are not always wearing long trench coats or sunglasses. From bourgeois/ respectable

often later than planned. With your infinity group you have checked the area and have debated where you want to march. Depending on the demonstration and your mood you easily march along, and you look around you who else is in your immediate surrounding. Maybe you know other infinity groups with whom you are lining up in a row. You are carrying the "Transpi" either over your heads or on the side. Beforehand you've made a plan what to do in case of a physical quarrel, so that you can either use your banner not only to convey your important message but also as a protection, or you can take it down and form a chain.

Looking after Others

It would be good if your infinity group would also look after people who are not part of a group but march on their own, especially in case the demonstration gets a little rough. You could also consider whether you want to tell a person, who is running around with a beer bottle in his/her hand, that this behaviour is not at all cool but endangers himself/herself as well as others. The same applies to cases where persons once more make sexist remarks or show a macho attitude, your infinity group can intervene in that moment. Discuss beforehand how you want to react.

Within your infinity group you know how far each of you is prepared to go in the demonstration and, if necessary and possible, you should discuss it - including the point in time when you want to leave the demonstration or when you want to storm up front with the others. In case it does get rough - the coppers try to single out people or don't want to let you through - form chains and also call upon others to do the same. This provides safety and the demonstration stays more compact. Look around you and check that nobody is run over, and in case the coppers try to arrest a person consider whether you want to go there,

were persuaded, but not convinced.

One or the other strats looking around for another option, another group. Squad or polit action group? We ask someone to prepare a special construction. One day before leaving to Wendland it is ready. We bring it with us, practically nobody of us ever see its real construction. We do not care a pip, we take it. At least we let it construct for that particular plan and there is no plan B.

In Wendland: Again, big "Hello" and hugs. Friends coming from all over places adjoin us. They do not know our plan yet, but they hope, that we have something to do. We celebrate our annual convention. Next day we have our plenary. What are your plans? Which options do exist? Twenty people knowing each other mere, hunt for the optimal CASTOR-blockade. Two days before the train coasts. Squad? Political action group? Wendland is a great territory we need cars, the composition of people in the cars is always changing, by that also the composition of people being a "squad" for half of the day. At the rest of they day you have another one sitting next beside you, again. Natch, she or he is also a good friend of you, I am glad to be with her/him. But who on earth is my squad right now? I am sure, we have to pinpoint it sometime and there is only one night left until it coasts, still. The seats available define the squads' number. Plenary. At least we assort each other. Who does which action? Who does which job?

The action is fixed, the construction prepared, we only need people to carry it out. But where are all those, with whom I planned this action? One sits over there in the corner and bunches his things, the other says farewell to us. She met some friends and prefers to join them, now. "What do you plan exactly?" "Time will see".

I will meet her in the night, anywhere in a blockade. At one of those many blockades, we were joining this night.

"Blockade-hopping". Like Sylvester parties in Berlin. But: We stopped in the issue of finding a squad. One night bevor CASTOR coasts. My squad surprises me, as it assembles. Two out of five persons I do not know hardly. So what? I am sad, I would have loved to join M. in his squad and this guy over there, too. I am sobered. But at least we wanted to make this action, the people in my squad also want to make this action, this is our linking ankle, joins together, am I not right? But still doubts are left. Not all of us are absolutely convinced. But at least we have to do anything, don't we? "Fair enough, I will join... for your sake" There is also frustration, that the others cancelled earlier before, do something else now. Never mind. At least there will be some kind of evaluation afterwards, we can discuss then, not now. I fell frustrated nonetheless. Some can feel the effects of my frustration. Alas... it could have been great.

Suddenly we have to notice, that we cannot carry out our action at all. The place to perform has been burned. We slink off with one's tail between one's legs. Do not know, what to do right now. There is no more sense in our night of performance. Where is now our linking? We got from A to B and back again. Everywhere we meet people, feeling the same way we do. Everywhere we have got the felling of being delayed. We do not have any motivation to act now. We are absolutely exhausted. Resignation? In the end hiding in the woods for hours. Waiting CASTOR to pass and we can jump on the street in the last minute. When this certain point came, half of the group was asleep and di not hear the "GO!", the other half of the group sets off a run absolutely confused in all kind of directions. Each of us stands on hers/his own, no one has the heart to get onto the street. The squad in the back is lacking. The squad, that goes ahead. Being five absolutely determined we had done it, but alone? I note this thought for the eva-

AFFINITY GROUPS WITHIN LARGE GROUPS **EXAMPLE: THE DEMONSTRATION**

Your infinity group wants to go to the next demonstration.

Before the Demonstration

Of course you are well prepared. You all have slept well and have discussed once more whether you feel well and what you're planning to do on the demonstration - this can be everything from marching along to breaking through... Some of you attended the demonstration prep. meeting (in case your group has been in existence for a longer period of time) and informed the rest of you. Even though you have not participated in the preparation of the demonstration itself, one or two of your infinity group did attend to see how your group could help. Beforehand your group had discussed whether your group is ready to take on certain tasks, i.e. the protection of the loudspeaker car "Lauti" (see the glossary) or whether you want to march along in the first row of the demonstration. As you had not reached a definite agreement on these points, you did not agree to any specific tasks. After the demonstration prep. meeting you met again and did decide to make a banner (called "Transpi" - short for Transparent). You met before the demonstration and went together as a group to the demonstration meeting point.

Your arrangements should best be made personally and not by phone. It is likely that the phone conversation is listened in, and you do not think it necessary that the copers know right away that you are on your way.

During the Demonstration

Now you have arrived at the demonstration, have met friends, have listened a bit to the oral statements. The demonstration is slowly going to start now - unfortunately

- Private security agencies don't have police or other authority rights. They are only allowed to do what any other citizen is allowed to.

In case of arrest

- Shout your name, date of birth, address and nationality to the other demonstrators.
- You are obliged to tell the police your name, address, date and place of birth and your nationality only.
- Don't talk about other things!
- Don't make any statement! You got the right to say nothing. The police station, police car and jail are not the right place to talk. In this way you won't incriminate yourself or other people.
- Don't sign any paper!
- Ask about the reason for your arrest.
- Try to call the EA to inform it about your and other people's situation.
- In case of a "Erkennungsdienstliche Behandlung" (ED = taking pictures, fingerprints; registering, weight, body marks, tattoos, etc.) and in case of taking a DNA-sample renounce these measures verbally and let the police note it down. Don't agree in taking a DNA-sample (saliva, hairs, other cellular material). Don't sign any paper.
- At least you have to be released at the end of the next day. Otherwise you have to be taken to a judge.
- If you think you won't get free in time, at least if you come to a judge insist on a lawyer. The EA can help you to get one. Take your right to say nothing even before the judge.

After you are released

- Report immediately to the EA. Even if you haven't done it before: maybe someone else did.

evaluation meeting.

But now I only want to fall into sleep, being absolutely sobered. Dreaming of a squad, who know's what to do, what they want to achieve. Knowing even what they want to achieve, if the ultimate action fails. A squad knowing that they want to reach something - together. Next year?

SAMBA

by the Action Samba Band Berlin: Rhythms of Resistance (RoR).

The Action Samba Band is involved in a network of political percussion bands, supporting demonstrations or direct action.

The idea to use music as a part of the methodology of resistance is not a new idea. Actually Afro Bloc parading drum bands emerged in the mid 70s, these bands developed in the poorest urban districts, became part of resistance movements and played as "a force of resistance and source of self confidence". The growth of Schools of Samba both in Brazil and all over the world since the 80's, is largely a result of the commercialisation of this culture of resistance.

The music combined with dancers and a basic concept of "tactical frivolity" [Ich würde das mit der Fußnote erklären], was proved during the IMF/ World Bank meeting in Prague for the first time in a Pink-Silver carnival bloc in September 2000. With bands forming in across Europe and beyond an international network of percussive resistance to the march of capitalism is now emerging. Street carnival is the vital component of their protest and life and fun. Because all of the independent bands are playing the same rhythms, it is easy to catch up with each other when marching in one bloc to a demonstration.

We are a larger band with various grades of engagement of the individuals. Depending on who plays a part of it and takes the responsibility actually, the group's model is totally different. By that the Action Samba Band is a creative stage of protest, shared in manifold ways. It is important to us that all people involved account for the decisions met by the group. [Bitte Satzstellung und Wortwahl überprüfen, ich glaube ist ein bisschen kompliziert ausgedrückt]. Consequently we use the consensus decision-making to realize that.

We met once a week for rehearsal and plenary so that we have regular practical experience and exchange of ideas. We want to cope a common attitude of politics. Anti-sexist, anti-racist, non-hierarchical. The atmosphere in the band is rather relaxed and pleasant, because we are more women than men in the group (to fix it with regard to peer groups). It is important to establish small squads of two to four people during direct actions, so that each can have a look for another. No-one should feel lonesome with hers/his needs nor fears. Squads are very important to evoke a feeling of security and care for each other. The squads in our band cluster by three criteria: friendship and trust, rhythms' section (e.g. the players of small and big instruments should be in one squad, as the ones with the small instruments have to assist the ones with the big instruments, if it is necessary to run away; as the ones with the big instruments are severely restricted in terms of mobility and tempo.) and the third criteria, which is maybe the most important: the level of risk each is willing to take.

How far do I want to go? Where are my limits? Would I accept to be detained? are the striking questions one has to answer for herself/himself to find people with similar interests. If it is getting hairy, it is important to us, that no-one is on hers/his own just for a minute.

ERMITTLUNGSAUSSCHUSS (EA)

Legalteam - finds out the whereabouts of arrested people
- gets lawyers

Think about before demonstration

- Take along your valid identity card, passport, visa and residence permit.
- Take along small change and a phonecard.
- Take along your health insurance certificate /card and 10 Euros for the case of medical treatment.
- Take along a first-aid kit and necessary medicaments.
- Write down the EA-phonenummer.
- Take along something for writing.
- Empty all your pockets; just take along what you really need at the demonstration!
- Watch out: In Germany it is illegal to take along or wear things, that protect your body against violence (helmets, protectors, etc.), that can be used as weapons or prevent your identification (masks). So be careful.
- Drugs and alcohol don't match with demonstrations; it endangers yourself and other people.
- Leave photographs, calendars, adress- and telephone books at home.
- Delete all memories on your cellphone.
- Avoid the use of contact lenses and greasy ointments. Teargas will enrich in it.

Think about at the demonstration

- Think about what you are talking at the demonstration; there are many police-agents in the crowd.
- Don't take pictures or videotapes from persons at the demonstration.
- Don't go to demonstration by yourself. stay together in groups, before and after the demonstration.
- If the police arrests people: Try to write down their name, date of birth, address and nationality and report it to the EA.

go and when do we stop? Of course the group can't think about every eventuality but at least a few scenarios can be thought through. Whichever these could be, depends on what you want to do and where. It could span from something like the mentioned gap in the police chain or violence from the side of the police over to Nazis taking part in the demonstration, etc, etc...

It's also a good thing to make out a meeting point beforehand in case of an emergency situation that prevents you from staying together.

Debriefing 1: Immediately after the action/campaign, back to the camp, a cafe or wherever - in a quiet place. Meeting to summarize, chat about how it went and everybody is doing, as well as to come down.

Debriefing 2: If you meet regularly, you can talk about the action/campaign at your next meeting. If it's a one-time group, a good thing to do, would be an abstained meeting with a time distance to reflect about what has happened. It makes sense to process the events with some calm and distance: what worked well, what turned out to be not so good for me personally, what was simply awesome, did it work out the way we wanted? What could we do just different/better/more effective (ugh, what kind of a word!) next time? Or do we want to create something completely different next time?

This shouldn't just be about techniques but about cooperation within the group: to take care of each other or to clarify things better. With being self-reflective and honest with each other, we come closer to our ideal of a better interaction and communication.

Because: You are not on your own, otherwise they will kick your ass.

ClownArmy

RebelClowning was developed by a group of left-wing, non-authoritarian activists for the first time in 2003 when George W. Bush came for an audience to the UK („At last - after 500 years a real fool who is the greatest warlord of our days at the same time is let ahead the queen...!"). This group shaped the concept of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army - C.I.R.C.A. for short ().

This concept combines the ancient traditions of the skill to be a clown ("Clowning") with the principles of non-violent Direct Action. First of all it is aimed at the capitalist, unjust and deadly forms of the so called globalisation, it is against war, nuclear power and atomic forces, against militarism and militarising, against social, ecological, sexist exploitation or discrimination - and against all forms of racism. And so it is a part of the chain of the diversity of creative street protest as well as of the wealth of emancipated expressions of the "Theatre of the Suppressed" by Augusto Boal.

Since then, RebelClowning is gained momentum in many cities and countries. These camouflaged individuals dressed in olive green and contrasting colours, these muddled, yelling jokers using every situation for clownesque mockery and playing, these rebels already appeared within actions or manifestations in Australia, Brasil, Switzerland, Denmark, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Austria, in about ten cities of Germany, in the USA, in Ireland, in England - and, of course, in their hundreds in Scotland while the G8 summit!

Although each group of existing ClownUnits or battalions

developed a unique, self-determined and special character, the "Basics" - or the BasicTraining - according to the Original-CIRCA-Recipe still remains the same for all: on one side as Training Units, but on the other side also as a pool of arrangements for ActionComrades of different groups or languages. In case of an inter-planetary or intergalactic meeting of RebelClowns in a deployment the diverse greetings, games, marsh-figures should be common and performed together!

That is why a main focus of many units is the holding of workshops and training sessions. Others, mostly already very experienced and closed groups are more concentrated in well prepared, self-developed and spectacular actions. And there are groups with regular meetings and training. But - ideally all ClownArmyUnits are affinity groups for itself. For the "Gaggles"(small DeploymentUnits of 5 to 8, or a few more) RebelClowns this form of structure is certainly necessary - even when it is a spontaneous action of a few minutes!

As it was mentioned before, it is very important that all Clowns who want to participate in an action have completed a BasicTraining as well as possible. That also includes experiences and knowledge which are common and necessary for activists during actions.

Of course, the RebelClowns have got some special conditions - ie they should not come to a deployment dressed in "inconspicuous clothes" - or their nice, but greasy masks could cause disastrous problems for them if tear- or irritation gas is used against them by police. On the other hand, water-based make-up on a Clown will look extremely terrible in a rain-shower or during the use of water-cannons (by police...).

That is why many Clowns escape from tense and stressful encircled areas - they withdraw and feel quiet miserable

on, let's try". In those moments it is especially important not to twist someone's arm or to drag someone along against his/her will and to be aware of a quiet "I don't want this". In such situations it is crucial not to leave anybody standing alone. After all we want to get on together, and that also means nobody is left behind! If people are spontaneously dividing into two groups, like "we want to do something there", but "we like to do something else" why not split up? This is not a statement to "split up all the time and everybody stands alone in the end". However, it might be an option.

PREPARATION AND DEBRIEFING OF ACTIONS

Preparation

To begin with the content - before you and your group get started on specific issues of an action it's good to clarify the political intent and what you want to say/show/communicate. These could be questions like: 'does it make sense to disturb the traffic around the Nazi meeting or to occupy the meeting point itself?' or 'do we stage a sit-in on the Castor-route or do we create political pressure in order to prevent the Castor from moving in the first place?' It's about putting the campaign in a political context and to clarify what we want to achieve.

Once you have an idea there are a lot of things to discuss: who gets the fabric for the banner, when do we want to paint, has there been a similar campaign in the past and what do we want to do better? One should also think about the necessity to practice parts of the performance beforehand. It's also a good thing to come up with a name for your support group because it helps you find each other more easily in chaotic situations.

An aspect that is easily forgotten: How far do we want to

because you can't make any compromise at that point. Everybody should be sensitive that not everybody has the courage to veto. You should watch what happens when there is always a veto, in which situations a veto is given and whether the topic should for now be discussed on a more basic level .

Decisions are processes

All in all it's necessary for us to understand the way of making a decision as a process. There are techniques that are working for many groups, but this doesn't mean necessarily that you like to work with them. "Movement comes from moving!" not only the body but also in the head. Have fun experimenting, discussing, laughing, fighting, talking...

To make a constructive decision, it is good to find the explicit question first. What is the theme of the discussion and what exactly has to be decided? Maybe it is better to go back one step and discuss in principle, rather than losing yourselves in a discussion about details until everybody is totally sucked by the discussion. When you make "decisions" everybody should be asked if they really mean the same. For topics that affect everybody a flashlight-round could be a good idea. In doing so everybody has the possibility to say something and listen to what everybody else thinks about the topic. If this is well summarised, it is possible to develop a concrete question to continue the discussion. It also helps if people say that they don't think that the topic is important for them and that it's OK if only those people discuss it for which it is important.

Not to overrun/overwhelm each other

Now back to the "gap in the pig-chain", to the decision that has to be made quickly. We don't really have techniques for this; in those situations there is much about confidence, having a feeling for each other, or a spontaneous "come

when the game should be over...

But, there is another thing: Because the RebelClowns, of course, belong to the highest ranks it is a special joke during controls (by police...) to have extra ClownPassports with you (apart from civil ones!)

On principle, the preparations and the concrete arrangements are very significant to each Gaggle: using the hand-signs; staying aware and keeping the attention focussed on the calls or proposals and to the whole situation as well as to the other Clowns in the affinity group; staying together if possible; making clear who thinks who can do what (confidence); when there is a Clown willing to do her or his own action - or if a situation is too tempting: please, give a note to your "Body" or to your Bodies in any case, means to the arranged "partner/s" and arrange a meeting point or a phone call for a certain time afterwards; if you are more Gaggles: choose infinity group names and test it - ie as a chorus (is it suitable for longer distances?); if there are any planning try to keep it - or come together by using hand signals or calls and decide again according to the situation...

The analysis or evaluation of the action - means to calculate loss and win of a hopefully successful

RebelClownDeployment - you may have better success at this when you meet again, as the Clowns first have to find themselves back into their civil identities, clothes and mental conditions: The RebelClowning is a highly emotional and energised affair!

When there is any stress the best thing has proven to be: cry for help around you; start paroles; (let made) make some pictures or film it if possible; demand the releasing of the Clown(s); if necessary, call the helping/ info line ((EA/ RA????)); wait for the releasing - picking up, removing the make-up, changing clothes, calming down,

coming back...

It is clear: Arrests of single Clowns should be avoided what ever happens!!!

A quick note on difficulties with RebelClownUnits as affinity groups: Clowns do what comes into their sense or to their senses - an idea or a game is to realise immediately - a funny appetite becomes to an unquenchable (means: not to satisfy) hunger for experience - their hearts want to get all of it and they give love permanently...

That means: It happens more often within deployments that the Clowns play away, that they stick with something inspiring, that they get lust/ lost in a dancing fever or that they forget themselves within a passionate tumult. By this - or as a result - they fortunately are not to calculate and neither one can dictate them nor could they be miss-used as strategic or ideological manoeuvre-mass!

Above all - the whole enterprise is dependent on abyss-deep HUMOUR, merciless SILLYNESS and absolute incomprehensible CONFUSION-TACTIC!

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM AND CLOWNESQUE RESISTANCE!

RUN AWAY FROM THE CIRCUS - JOIN THE REBEL CLOWN ARMY!

Possibilities to make a (quick) decision or "Shit, there is a gap in the pigs-chain/blockade!"

Maybe you have been on a manifestation or some action before; you wanted to stop the Castor, a fascist's march or to bug a lobbyist meeting? You had planned some nice things, because if people stand around in front of a police-blockade, there should be some nice pictures at least. Then the impossible happens: the cops are standing

bored 15 meters away from the castor-railway (oder: ...in front of the castor-railway with 15 meters space between each other), or the security is troubled by another group on the side entrance and the way to the lobbyist-podium is free! Well, what to do now? A quick decision is needed! We want more than nice pictures and direct action might be the better way. In this situation it is good to be with people who know each other, who have a similar level or spontaneously get the same idea - the latter seldom happens when you are on action together for the first time. This is about the way of making a decision within the group, without pressure of time.

Making a decision in consensus

First we wanted to write an article about the techniques how to make a quick decision, but while thinking about it, it has taken a back seat. More important is the processual approach and so this article centres on this.

First of all: we think that it is essential within an affinity group to reach decisions in consensus; otherwise you could join a political party, a sectarian political movement or a club. Some comments on consensus first, because everybody is just thinking of endless discussions until everyone says "yes", and the last full stop on the leaflet needs an hour of discussion, and the colour of the banner becomes a political question, and so on. It doesn't have to be like that! Often other reasons are behind this kind of discussion, in worst case personal quarrel which is battled out through discussions about the font of the banner.

Consensus means to us that everyone within the affinity group has the same opinion (the ideal case), or that the greater part of the group wants it and a smaller part says it is OK even though it's not the ideal solution (which you were unable to find, but at least you tried). What's important is that nobody puts in a veto! We assume that putting in a veto should be the last choice to end a discussion,