



No Peace with NATO! Or: The Right to Revolution

Libertad! on the upcoming 60th anniversary of NATO

In spring 2009, the NATO will be celebrating 60 years of its existence and its mission to safeguard the ‚free world‘. Unsurprisingly, this euphemism has become popular within the elites, as it does not convey the murderous practices of their enterprise. Libertad! calls for protest and resistance against the celebration.

Imperialist politics does not escape the necessity to display its power. The next event is scheduled to spring 2009. A summit will be arranged in Kehl and Strasbourg to celebrate NATO's 60th anniversary. The summit will be more than just a birthday party, where NATO's version of ‚freedom and democracy‘ is proclaimed. Under the headline „Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World“, the blueprint for a renewed military doctrine will be presented. They'll take off the gloves: NATO's operational area is the whole world, the arsenal includes global military interventions and preemptive nuclear strikes against „rogue states“.

60 years of NATO: The „Masters of War“ are not invulnerable. Let us steal the show. Let us set a powerful international movement in motion. Let us put the responsibility for war and the denial of rights on the agenda. The days of resistance at the G8 summit in Heiligendamm 2007 demonstrated the power collectively organised protest can unleash.

The Global Front

In the new world order, peace does not exist without war. „War is peace“ – the term has never been more accurate. In the classical conception, war was declared and peace was agreed. The principle of imperialist war is its endlessness. And it's not only about shooting and bombing. „Security policies“ and „crisis management“ are being executed through the IMF and the World Bank, the G8 and NATO. ‚Global governance‘ is the term. Down to earth, it means no more than the protection of the world market, the command over resources and the safeguarding of the privileges of Western lifestyle against the masses in the „wild zones“ of hunger, misery, slums and camps.

Undiluted imperialist thought: „*The invisible hand of the market relies upon a visible fist. McDonalds cannot expand without McDonnell Douglas, who builds the F15. The visible fist that guarantees the global security of Silicon Valley's technology is called U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps.*“ Thomas Friedman, special adviser to then U.S. Secretary Madeline Albright, wrote this on the occasion of the bombing of Yugoslavia. What is true for McDonalds und McDonnell Douglas, does apply to Volkswagen and EADS as well. War has become day-to-day business in German politics.

Another aspect called „Rent a war“ needs to be mentioned. In the new wars, regular soldiers are supplemented by modern mercenaries. Deregulation and privatisation have transformed transnational security policies. Security has, alongside the arms industry, developed into a business sector offering huge profits to private enterprise. Their services range from logistics, personal security, covert actions, torture, maintenance of prison camps to strategical and operational planning and the conduct

of combat operations. The annual revenue does already exceed 100 billion dollars. One reason for the subsequent replacement of state troops is the declining acceptance the rising number of casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan entails. Vietnam has taught them a lesson.

The Global Police State

Europe is no better than the U.S. The European project began with a series of strategical undertakings: the Single European Market, technological co-operation, joint arms development. By 2010, these efforts are scheduled to achieve a preliminary goal. At the Lisbon summit in March 2000, the heads of state and government declared that by then, Europe shall have become the world's most dynamic and competitive economic area.

The measures that have been deployed since then – privatisation, deregulation of the labour markets, reforms of taxation and social services – are elements of a general transformation process. From welfare to warfare, from the social state to the police state. It is this transition that is anticipated in the prevalence of zero-tolerance-approaches towards the unemployed, the undocumented migrants and dissident youth.

These domestic policies are matched by the aspiration of a military capacity to impose Europe's political and economical interests on a global scale. To that end, an independent military policy is required; an insight that was reinforced by the experience of the attack on Yugoslavia. Ten years ago, the EU had lacked the capacity to conduct that war. Since then, the alliance with the U.S. has been complemented by an independent axis Paris-Berlin. The NATO is the main framework, in which this co-operation is being played out. The location of the celebration site on the French-German border is no coincidence. France, with its nuclear arsenal, will soon be fully reintegrated into NATO. The followers of the social democratic variation of anti-Americanism may have failed to realise it: „Old Europe“ is history.

Within the global security architecture, divisions between the inside and the outside will be unmade. The transformation of the capitalist metropolis does not flow smoothly. Stability needs to be imposed through intensified social control. Video surveillance, electronic ankle bracelets, wiretapping and bugging operations, telecommunications data retention, the genetic fingerprint – all of these technological efforts aim at the preemptive control of the social antagonism – revolts, strikes, resistance.

The „War on Terror“ pervades the territories of Western states, imposing social discipline and pushing for an authoritarian restructuring of their societies. The mechanism was precisely described by the infamous Nazi ideologist Carl Schmitt: „*The sovereign is the one, who decides upon the state of emergency.*“ We have been embarked on a journey towards the total state, and

the dissolution of divisions between the military and the police is a stage to be passed. For instance at the G8 2007, when combat aircraft crossed the sky above the G8-resistance camp and troops were deployed to guard GM-crops. For instance, in the German „Counter-Terrorism-File“, a joint database accessible by 38 military, police and intelligence institutions. For instance, in the proposed foundation of a German National Security Council capable to bypass federal parliament.

They push the boundaries, most apparently concerning torture. This is not only documented by the global dimension of extraordinary rendition, torture and prison camps. All sorts of people feel called to discuss, under which ‚exceptional circumstances‘ and due to which ‚urgent reasons‘ torture should be legalised. Proposals that, some years ago, would have been met by utter resistance, suddenly appear as reasonable contributions. The problem has, obviously, transcended the immediate perpetrators. The honourable advocacy of torture in talk-shows and universities needs to be targeted.

The new enemies

Security is the key word in the „War on Terror“. For themselves, the Western states claim a security that, globally, does not exist and that is openly denied to the people of the global South. Colonialism, to be continued. The benefits of the capitalist civilisation have always been restricted to the privileged classes in the global metropolis, while the rest of the world has always been exposed to its destructive forces.

Capitalist globalisation and the new wars are two sides to a coin. It is the attempt to militarily control the crisis arising from capitalist accumulation without ever being able to solve it. Under Western dominance, we are witnessing a militarisation of the social, in Kosovo and Palestine, in Bagdad and Kabul, in the favelas of the Southern mega-cities and the banlieues of the metropolis. The military reconceptualisation of European migration policies and its operational integration in the military Frontex project, as well as the erection of detention camps at the barriers of Fortress Europe, is a striking example.

The figures of „the sleeper“, „the irregular combatant“ or „the illegal immigrant“ are the elements of the discourse that invokes the ‚terrorist threat‘. The dangerous individual is one that is outlawed per definition and whose life may be taken without punishment. This imaginary refers to al-Qaeda, the holy warrior and the warlord, it may easily be applied to the guerrilla, the rebel, the migrant as well. Some of these actors are expressions of resource wars and social disintegration, some express the social antagonism and rebellion which may translate into future revolutionary movements. Anticipating these developments, the new Field Manual of the U.S. Army bears the simple title „Counterinsurgency“.

The reactionary politicisation of the global class struggles may not be underestimated. Political Islam has developed into an independent social force. Its strength results from the changing relation of social powers and, not least, from the weakness of emancipatory politics. That said, it is equally true that „our perception“ and „our interpretation“ of the Islamic world is biased. From the first days of European colonialism, racism and enlightenment were intertwined. The story of the imperialist conquest has always been told as the „civilisation of the savages“ and the „salvation from their eternal darkness“. This orientalist discourse lives in the imaginary of the irrational and backward Muslim and the oppressed woman in headscarf. The

„cartoons controversy“ is the worst example of the dynamics Western stereotyping may unleash. Unfortunately, there is also a leftist version.

Connecting and radicalising initiatives

The cultural and political corruption affecting sectors of the left emerged clearly from the Second Gulf War onwards. Since then, almost all sorts of leftists have felt the necessity to come up with some new antifascist reason to wage a war. It is a double betrayal: if it is the defence of privileges that drives the war hawks, their ultimate rationale is the solidarity with the ruling class.

Along with its internationalism, it was the anti-war movement that characterised the German social movement left. In 1980, the ‚Bremen riot‘ – an outburst of protest against the first public swearing-in ceremony the German military arranged on the occasion of its 25th anniversary – sparked off a series of militant demonstrations and attacks against the NATO and the Bundeswehr. Ever since 1945, anti-militarism has been a core principle connecting the entire left through its history, marked by the anti-nuclear-movement, the Vietnam solidarity, the anti-NATO-campaign and the world-wide mass demonstrations on the eve of the Iraq war on February 15th, 2003.

On the occasion of the NATO summit in Kehl/Strasbourg, we should overcome any awkward despondence concerning war. Let us strive for a strong mobilisation inspired by the experiences made in Heiligendamm: a process of collective organisation that facilitates decisive collective action. These days of resistance should not be glorified into some revolutionary action; nevertheless, for many, they were a revolutionary experience. Let us use the months ahead to organise a plural movement with a joint aim. The NATO celebration shall not go off without a hitch. Let's give it a try!

To live up to its cause, an anti-NATO-campaign should be international and it should outlive a single event. We should support and intensify running campaigns, such as the anti-recruitment-protests, the annual mobilisation against the „Munich Conference on Security Policies“, and the local movements throughout Europe that oppose military bases and the deployment of troops.

These are the cornerstones: delegitimation of NATO, an uncompromising position against war, torture and the European and U.S. security policies – no complicity with the power.

A movement against the „visible fist“ of globalisation will only gain momentum if it actively involves the plurality of movements against capitalist globalisation. Because these are two sides to a coin. Ultimately, this is all about the power of disposition over our personal and social lives. „*The right to revolution*“, did Friedrich Engels once write, „*is the sole true ‚historical right‘, upon which all modern states without exception are built.*“ Our summer fairy tale shall continue. **See you in Strasbourg and Kehl!**

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Info on the activities against the NATO summit:

www.info.libertad.de/no-nato-09

www.interventionistische-linke.de - natogipfel2009.blogspot.de

- www.natofeier.angreifen.org - www.gipfelsoli.org



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