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April 1. afternoon : Arrival in Strasbourg

When I was taking a walk in the City, some helicopters of the security police were flying in the sky and I saw fences and signboards prepared for setting up red/orange zones or controlling transportation during the NATO Summit.

On the street along the river, several people had already begun to make a small campaign against NATO, with rainbow colored peace flags and costumes like a pierrot, by distributing flyers and talking with people passing through the street.

April 2. Visit the Camp with Faty (la Ganzau)



There were many tents and people (especially young people carrying a big rucksack) on the vast field. In addition a bar, an outdoor bio kitchen, information center & board, booths of each organization near tents, and a concert stage for culture events were equipped. The advance training and meeting for the participants of civil disobedience took place as well. People staying in the camp were sharing information and limited resources like water and foods, but it looked international and really peaceful. (But at night it became so cold, I heard).

On the same day, namely on Tuesday, a demonstration (from the Camp

Ganzau to *centre ville*) was organized. As I heard, the terminus was “la place Kleber” so I was waiting for them with Faty at the place, where some people of a peace group made speech and sold peaceful colored flags in the front of the statue of Kleber. On the other hand, there were also police surrounding the place, wearing protective clothing, some were with horses. At the time when the demonstration was about to reach there, more police got together and gave people a caution. The people sitting on the terrace of a restaurant facing the place took refuge for a short time.

Unfortunately, I could not see the demonstration itself, because I had left there just before they arrived. However, according to the article that I read on the website of “NATO-Gipfel 2009” (<http://natogipfel2009.blogspot.de/>), there were some troubles between demonstrators and police during the G20-solidemonstration in Neuhof (Strasbourg). Moreover, the police had used gas (even illegal ones) and shock-howitzer around the international camp in Ganzau.

As Irmgard and Heidi wrote, the police used such terrible things against handicapped, old people, pregnant women as well. Did they really have to use them in the situation? There must be better, peaceful alternatives. There is no question that the will of many people who got together only to wish for peace by non-violent, peaceful way was spoiled.

April.3. NO to NATO Congress (1)

April 4. Demonstration

It was the first time for me to join a demonstration, in addition I had read guidelines issued by an organizer (on the website) telling that there would be thousand of police in Strasbourg to control for the NATO Summit as well as giving information about legal & medical team. So I had been worried about it, to tell the truth.

It was a pity that the Demo resulted in “violence” to some extent, not peaceful way.

We should have got a section on the march for women after the peace

organizations, but the plan was totally spoiled. People including me were in panic because of the fire and gas, once they started to advance, there was no space to go out of the crowd.

Although the place was disorder, the speech of organizer on the stage were provocative against the police (helicopters flying above the place) and finally pushed ahead with starting the demonstration.

I walked all the way to the meeting place near the bridge with Ursula, avoiding the controlled area like red and orange zones. The bridges which lead to German side and Kehl like pont d'Anvers, had already been controlled by police, moreover a part of the road along the river was full of police & military cars and personnel, including blue tanks.

At that time, around 11:30, Pont Vauben war almost free to go through, but the shortest way to the Europe Bridge, namely Avenue du Pont de l'Europe was closed by about 30 policemen guarding the entrance. When we were about to reach the meeting point for the demonstration, we saw other women of our group.

While we were waiting for the start, the sky over the place was being filled with black smoke due to fire. The crowd was totally in panic and stampeded. We also tried to run away covering our eyes, mouth and nose so as to avoid inhaling gas. But we had already lost sight of some women at the time. Once the demonstrators started to walk out of the place, I struggled to keep up with our group for fear of getting lost.

I was with Cynthia and Anna (from Germany) all the way. Their presence made me feel confident. I cannot imagine how uneasy and terrible I would feel if nobody accompanied me.

Honestly speaking, it was the first demonstration in which I took part in my life and I had never expected that I came across such horrible situations. We had to clamber up and go beyond a railway (relatively steep slope) to escape from tear gas, smoke and the attack to police by a young group.

While a big group of demonstrators (inc. black block) stampeded toward the bridge (Pont Vauben) and try to reach city central insisting the basic right for demonstration, we separated from them at the turning.

The violent way of demonstration should be, of course blamable. But what is worth, the media use them (incidents) sometime for the governmental interests or to give an advantage not to peaceful demonstrators but to police/military.

In the local Newspaper “DNA” issued on April 5, it was described with “Entre Marteau et Enclume(板ばさみになる) » La manifestation « POUR LA PAIX »

April 5 NO to NATO Congress (2)

There were less police in the city, but still they were watching out at some points from early morning. They looked really bored, because they had nothing special to do. Some were sleeping in the car. (I couldn't help thinking that “Do they really have responsibility and correct understanding for their work?? Or they were there only because they had taken orders from the French authority??”)

I was surprised and shocked to hear that some people got hurt (losing their voice or sight/ eczema) because of gas. I felt really sad and angry to such arrogant and injustice behaviors of the police. But anyway it was meaningful that we could share our different experiences in the demonstration in order to find and discuss the problems and its solutions for more peaceful and more effective movement or what we can do for it.

Since I failed to join my friends, who went to the congress building by car, I tried to take a tram. Probably Tram A, which go directly to “Illkirch” was controlled to some extent (the electrical board did not work), but the tram itself worked anyhow. When I was waiting for the Tram, the policemen stopped some young boys (5~6 boys) from going away near the tram station. I don't know exactly, what happened, but the boys had just to stand there under surveillance of the police.

From 10 to 16 o'clock I joined Panels in *salle bleue*. It was worthwhile that we, participants had also chance to speak out and share our different experiences, but significantly too short. Anyway the speech by Cynthia and Marlene on April 5 on behalf of our group were worthy of praise.

We left Strasbourg by car, went past the Europe bridge. I saw the Hotel Ibis, and other 2 building near the bridge were almost completely burned and had broken down, and also many people surrounding the debris of the fire and taking photos of them as well as people walking with peace flag.

There was no control by police any more to pass the border between France and Germany, but it doesn't mean that all the problems relating to the events (and of course, militarism or NATO itself) have been solved

After I came back to Berlin, I went to the meeting of WILPF Berlin and reported about this event in Strasbourg as well as to friends in Japan.

I checked the Japanese news (on the Internet) during the week (from 1 to 5 April), but I could hardly find any article about troubles in Strasbourg (the fire, demonstration, use of gas, etc) but only about G20 and NATO Summit like the consensus of sending more troops to Afghanistan, namely the information on the surface.

Honestly speaking, I did not pay so much attention to NATO, when I was in Japan. It was partly because of the lack of public news, but also lack of my own awareness.

Japan is not a member state of NATO but it doesn't mean that Japan has nothing to do with NATO. Rather directly and indirectly our country could be a party to militarist system in the world, especially through the strong security relationship with USA, even if we have "Article 9" in our constitution.

Japanese people of anti-nuclear weapon, anti-foreign (exactly US) military bases and Peace Committee have also let me notice that it is important to work together with peaceful partnership/friendship around the world, to recognize our position as a country, which promised renunciation of war and eternal peace,

and to make people become aware of the problem. There is also a close connection to US bases in Japan (Okinawa, Iwakuni, Tokyo etc), which I am studying and we, WILPF Kyoto group are mainly addressing. So I learned that we have to take into account also the NATO's militarism.

Women's vigil was effective, I think. But unfortunately, it was not possible to have women's section in the demonstration.

I found it very interesting and wonderful that some of women in our group could speak several languages fluently and they helped the communication between people who can speak different languages from each other by translating. It was also of help when we were in the demonstration or somewhere we were strangers in asking people the way or about what was happening. At the same time, it has motivated me to learn languages (in particular German, English and French) much harder. Although I cannot speak English/French and I had sometimes difficulty to tell my opinions or feelings, all of the people I communicated were very kind and tolerant.

Relating to that, a strategy which was suggested in our workshop (3.April) was impressive for me: get the language to basic levels.

My interpretation is that official languages (language used often at international level) like English or French should be translated into own (mother) tongue so that local people can understand easily and correctly. (e.g. translation of CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 for awareness development)

At the same time, it means that technical/legal terms should be translated into simple language so that ordinary people (who has no special/academic knowledge) or kids? can also understand them.