

Emma Rosengren, Stockholm

Josefine and I arrived at the Karlsruhe airport on Friday morning, April 3rd. When we came to the train station we realized that it would be almost impossible for us to get to Strasbourg, as all trains were cancelled. However, by taking the local trams and changing some 4 times, we finally arrived to Strasbourg in the afternoon. Once in Strasbourg we realized that it was not possible for us to get to the conference; as you know, all trams had been taken out of service. It was a great disappointment for us, since we really wanted to attend the workshop later that evening. Instead of participating in the workshop we stayed in the city center.

Saturday morning we got up early to make sure that we would be at the bridge to meet WILPF women on time. It was tricky to get there since the police was trying to close the whole city down, but we finally made it there. After meeting with the other wilpf women we went to the area for the demonstration. When we heard that the rest of the people who were on their way there were not allowed to cross the bridge we decided to take a walk to see what was happening. Close to the meeting point we ran into the demonstration, of young men mostly dressed in black. A photographer told us that it was not safe for us to stand where we were standing since activists threw stones etc and we were not wearing helmets. We decided to go into a hotel (Ibis) and wait for the aggressive people to pass. However, some activists decided that this hotel was evil, for unknown reasons. They threw stones towards the windows and tried to break into the hotel's main entrance by trying to force a barricade fence into the door. This made us and the hotel crew feel uncomfortable and unsafe since we were standing in the entrance of the hotel. The aggressive people did not manage to break the door and windows so they left. We decided to leave as well we did not know if they would come back. Eventually we did find out that they came back, and that the hotel was burnt down.

After leaving the hotel we went to the other side of the bridge, sick of hanging around with black dressed aggressive teens. We watched the chaos from the other side of the river and tried to convince the police to get our colleagues out from the island. Some of the policemen listened to what we said, but unfortunately they could not help us. After walking around for quite some time, trying to find another way out from the island, we finally heard from Annelise that they were safe with some locals eating cake. That made us happy!

It is sad that things like this happened when we gather to demonstrate for peace. However, we are safe back in Stockholm and will continue the struggle!

In Peace,
Emma and Josefine