

**Report back from the Working Group on Feminist Anti-militarism
No-to-NATO Activists Conference, Berlin, 16-18 October 2009
Presented by Ursula Gelis**

Five women attended the working group, representing five organisations and from four countries. The first question we addressed was 'why do we want to organize as women?' First and foremost, it is because women have a particular experience of violence and war, different in many ways from that of men. We know also that many women in Europe are looking for active involvement in working for peace. We want to reach those women, and we think our networks have this capability.

Our specific aim in connection with No-to-NATO is to make NATO and the militarization of Europe more visible to women and their effects on women better understood. Many of the groups in our networks are already active on issues connected to NATO - for instance against the war in Afghanistan, nuclear weapons sites, and against military bases. Now we want to create communication and coordination between and among us so as to link these local perceptions and local actions within a broader perspective that addresses NATO as a military structure.

Second, as women have a broader conception of security than that which prevails in international relations. For us it includes not only security from war and militarism but also security in everyday life, including freedom from hunger, and from domestic and interpersonal violence.

For us nonviolence is non-negotiable. We are a nonviolent movement in the deep sense that nonviolence is not just a useful means for us, but a goal in itself. It is not a passive but an active nonviolence – many of our groups are engaged in nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience, for instance at military bases.

The call from Stuttgart in 2008 lacked a statement on nonviolence. We wish to insist that in re-drafting the appeal now such a statement be included.

Further actions: we plan to continue to develop our e-mail list "Women against Nato" in the coming year. We hope to coordinate our local activities better, and reach out to more women. We request that some of our names be on the e-list of No-to-NATO so as to remain informed, and be in touch with actions planned by No-to-NATO.