

BLOCK G8

MOVE

BLOCK

STAY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do you want to block the G8 meeting?

Neoliberal capitalist globalisation – for which the G8 stands – increases the gap between the poor and the rich every day. The G8 claim they are combating global destitution, whereas they and those whose interests they represent are responsible for hunger, wars and environmental destruction.

That is why we will deny the G8 any legitimacy. We are not addressing the G8 with any demands, but say “No!”. In order to express our clear “No!”, we will not simply demonstrate. Instead we will actively thwart the G8 and block the access roads to the meeting place, which is used by numerous diplomats, translators and supply vehicles in order to get to Heiligendamm where the G8 summit will take place.

Who can take part?

Anyone can take part in the mass blockades. Our mutual basis is an Action Concept and a collective Call for Action. The aim of Block G8 is to be as many people as possible in order to get effective blockades going. It is important for us to create a situation, which will be transparent for everybody, including those with little or even no experience in blockading. Anyone should be able to participate in Block G8. That is why we put on open trainings in various cities as well as at the camps during the G8 Summit.

What distinguishes Block G8 from other actions?

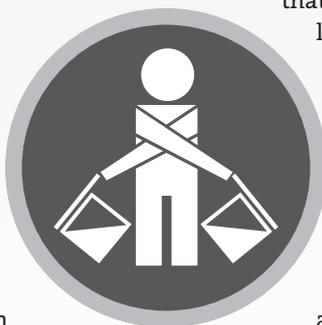
Over the course of the G8 Summit there will be a variety of actions and blockades. Block G8 exists as one of these many different concepts! In contrast to, for example, small and well-rehearsed groups of people who use other methods, e.g. materials, to blockade, Block G8 banks on

the masses. With as many people as possible, we want to effectively blockade the access roads to the meeting place of the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm. We want to enable as many people as possible to participate. We are acting on the assumption that the presence of a broad public will counteract an escalation on the part of the police, which is why we talk openly about the blockades and have sought to achieve public visibility about Block G8 in the run-up to the event.

The Block G8 alliance is composed of people and groups with very different backgrounds of experience with blockades and other types of actions. During our collective preparations we did not stop at simply recognising our different ideas, we took things a step further: Block G8 is a completely new concept, woven together from our manifold experiences, incorporating the advantages of many strategies of various political traditions.

But blockades are forbidden...

To send refugees to their deaths, to deny AIDS/HIV sufferers in Africa affordable medication by patenting it, to drive the unemployed into poverty and to create wars is allowed. A human blockade is, just like illegal parking, a minor administrative offence; that is, when compared to the illegitimacy of the G8 and the policies that they are directly responsible for, completely legitimate and necessary. It is well within the traditions of civil disobedience that confront, from below, the formal right of those in power. The G8 in comparison is a club of just eight influential and rich states that have the arrogance to make decisions about how the rest of the world is to live. Why isn't the G8 and neoliberal global capitalism forbidden? They are at the very least illegitimate and violent,



which is why we shall confront them with acts of civil disobedience.

Which groups are involved?

The campaign involves over 120 different political groups, organisations and projects. We come from church and anti-fascist groups, from the radical-left, from the environmental and anti-nuclear movement, from trade union and political party youth organisations and non-violent action groups.

How can I participate?

Best of all, organise yourself in an affinity group with other people. If you come along, there will be chance to meet up with other people during the action trainings on the camps. You can find the latest information at the Block G8 info stalls on the camps.

How should we behave during the actions?

It is quite likely that on our way to the blockade location, police lines or barriers will try to stop us. We will evade them, make use of any gaps so as to move through them or make use of other non-escalating methods. We will not let them stop us and will not engage with any escalation strategies the police might use. We do not want to hurt anybody. Besides this, our goal are the streets, not the police. Our shield is our concept of multiplicity, our large numbers and a deliberate attention to public visibility (also through a media presence). At the blockade location there will be an array of actions. People will blockade the road with sit-ins, others will stand in chains, link arms or hold on to each other and maybe make use of protective materials such as cushions or balloons to protect the body. Some of those people will employ the tactic of pushing against police lines to make the clearing of the blockade by the police more difficult. All the different concepts of blockading within the scope of Block G8 will act in solidarity with each other and not put others at risk. That is to be achieved by binding agreements and solidarity. We will stick together and resist together!

What legal consequences might there be as a result of my participation in the blockades?

People who block roads by sitting or standing, or move through police lines, are officially committing an administrative offence – like when you get a ticket for parking your car in the wrong place.

Unfortunately, we can not foresee all contingencies or prevent the police from constructing false accusations. For example, actively pushing against police lines can be construed as “resisting the executive officer”.

Judging from our experience, it is unlikely that mass blockades will result in any serious legal consequences.

However, it is possible that participants of the blockade will be taken into custody. Worst case scenario is that such an arrest keeps you in preventative custody until the end of the G8 summit (which would be Friday). But you must always remember: it will not hit you on your own. You can bank on the solidarity of the others taken into custody, and remind yourself of the

solidarity of all the people that are working to ensure your release!

You will get more detailed tips and information right before the actions and at the camps.

Are you counting on police violence and how are you going to deal with this?

In that we are planning a long-term and effective blockade, we also have to count on an eviction. Unfortunately, the experiences of the last years show that time and again, the police react to protests and blockades with violence. However, with publicity work, in the run up to the event we will try to create a political climate that diminishes the possibilities for overreactions on the side of the police.

If the police do escalate the situation, we will not allow ourselves to be drawn in; but rather, resist the eviction through the means of civil disobedience.

Our defence is the concept of diversity, mass participation and public visibility (including via the media).

In the blockades, we feel responsibility for everyone and will attempt to minimise injuries. In addition to this, we intend to create the highest level of transparency as possible for all participants in the action and give everyone the option to determine their own limits together with an affinity group, whilst maintaining the space for people to leave the blockade if this situation arises for them.

What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is an agreement between 6 to 15 people who trust each other and act together during an action. This group size is given to enable everyone enough time to talk whilst keeping the decision-making time to a minimum. Affinity groups have two main functions:

They enable the best possible protection for individuals during an action or a demonstration. Within the affinity group one should take care of one another as well as give space to articulate one's fears.

Affinity groups are an important contribution to self-organisation. On the one hand they enable larger groups to take action through a system of delegates from each group. On the other hand an affinity group creates the opportunity to not merely ‘consume’ an action but also to actively participate in it through contributing one's own ideas and activities.

What's up with that fence?

First of all, it's scandalous that 13 million Euros of public money is wasted on the construction of kilometres of fence around Heiligendamm. In addition, the fence is a massive intrusion into the basic rights of both inhabitants and demonstrators.

That the G8 have to hide behind high walls away from big cities, protecting themselves from the majority of the world's population is without doubt to be attributed to the success of the alter-globalisation movement. The fence is thus a symbol of how much the legitimacy of the G8 has diminished. To have spent that amount of money on the fence for a one-week summit is an obvious and

perverse waste. We therefore propose to make the best of it and put the arriving war criminals behind their own bars. Thousand of people will contribute to this by blockading.

Can I leave the event at any time?

We want to create a situation that is as transparent as possible for the participants of the blockade. This also means that everybody should be able to estimate how far s/he would like to go and, if necessary, to leave the blockade. Most of the time this has been possible during the blockades of the past years. However, we have often experienced that the police illegally surround the event to inhibit people's freedom of movement. But normally, you will have the opportunity to leave the blockade until the third demand to disperse by the police, and to support the event through your presence and by standing at the side of it. In any case, it is important to organise yourself in an affinity group, so as to be able to leave the event together.

There will not be an action training in my town – can I still take part in the blockades?

Of course you can take part in the blockades without prior participation in any action training. There will, however, be the chance to take part in an action training on the camps.

What should I bring along?

We have come to stay! This means that we are envisaging long-lasting blockings and will have to be prepared accordingly. Once we have reached the blockading points, we plan to stay as long as possible and will not leave voluntarily. Thus, you should take along drinks and food for at least 24 hours. In addition, it is advisable to take along spare clothes and a sleeping bag. If you need to take medication, please do not forget to bring it along.

Will the police stop us from reaching the streets?

The streets are long. The police will not be able to block everything for kilometres on end, and we only have to block one single spot. In addition, the streets run through open fields. In contrast to the situation in a town, we do not have to stay on the streets but can go around the police barricades. If we are more people taking part in the blockading than there are police wo/men, we can stretch ourselves so far that gaps will eventually form somewhere.

For how long do you want to continue the blockades for?

We have come to stay! Once we have reached the blockading points, we will not leave them voluntarily. The event will be a long-lasting and effective blockade. We will actively get in the way of the G8 and occupy and block the roads leading to the secluded venue of the Summit, which the bulk of diplomats, interpreters and supply vehicles have to take to reach Heiligendamm. We want to effectively disrupt the G8 Summit and thus cut it off from its infrastructure. Thus, the mass blockading could last for the entire duration of the summit.

I have never taken part in such an event before – is mass blockading for me?

The campaign Block G8 is meant for inexperienced people, everybody can and should take part. During the event, we want to create a situation which is transparent for all the people taking part in blockading and which, if necessary, also allows for stepping and standing aside. Actions of civil disobedience are not only politically necessary, but also interesting and can even be fun. Participation in the mass blockades might even encourage you to take part in further events.

There will be action trainings at the protest camps, a good opportunity to exchange experiences, to answer questions, to dissipate potential fears and to prepare ourselves together.

Do you want to do defend yourselves from by police by confronting them with “street battles” and “burning barricades”?

No. By mass actions we mean large numbers of people not masses of material. We don't want to escalate the situation, and we will not let ourselves be provoked by potential strategies that the police might employ to escalate the situation. Already in the run up to the events we want to increase the political price of police repression, during the actions we will resist them, together and in solidarity with one another, by means of civil disobedience, to which we have the right. We shall not escalate the situation. We wish to create a situation in which all participants can act in solidarity with one other, watch out for one another and respect the different limits each person may have, as well as the different protest traditions that come together in this action. Our aims are mass action, diversity and public visibility (facilitated also through a media presence). Thus, by mobilising thousands of people from different social, political and cultural backgrounds into a mass action of civil disobedience, we want to effectively blockade the Summit and exclaim, with a huge big exclamation mark, an unmistakable and very loud 'No' to the G8 summit.

And what exactly do you want to achieve with your blockades?

The act of blockading is different from other acts of protest such as demonstrations, bicycle- processions, counter-summits and so forth in that we want to protest against the G8 actively, with our bodies. This is how we exclaim a clear and unmistakable “No” against the G8 and the neo-liberal global capitalism that it represents. This is not about asking the G8 politely to develop a 'better' form of policies. The G8 is an illegitimate club and should, together with neo-liberal global capitalism, be stamped out. To make our “No” clear, we want to block the G8 as effectively as possible by cutting it off from its infrastructure. During the WTO conference in 1999 in Seattle, it was possible for the first time through mass actions, as well as other forms of blockading and direct action, to delay the opening ceremony of the conference by numerous hours – an event that was shown all over the world, and showed the first cracks in the project of neoliberal globalisation. And so in Heiligendamm, we

want, with as many different people and as effectively as possible, to blockade the Summit so that these cracks, that are already apparent through all the social struggles worldwide, are enlarged.

Can we actually get to Heiligendamm?

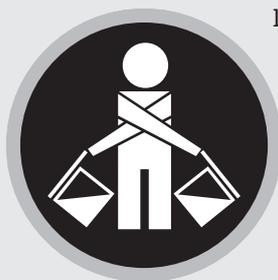
Because the G8 elites have erected a 13 million Euro wall around themselves, getting to them will not be possible. But that is no tragedy, we don't need them. In fact the best would be if they never got out from behind their wall. Our goal is to, as effectively as possible, block the access roads that lead to Heiligendamm and bring the thousands of diplomats, interpreters, supply-vehicles and ministerial bureaucrats to the event. If they do not get to Heiligendamm, then the Summit cannot happen and those heads of state that have been flown in by helicopter will be terribly bored behind their wall.

Where can I get further information?

Information concerning the mobilisation in all its dimensions have been found at www.gipfelsoli.org, www.g8-2007.de and www.heiligendamm2007.de. All information regarding the mass blockades are of course to be found at www.block-g8.org. Questions regarding Block G8 should best be put in an email and sent to info@block-g8.org

What will happen after the G8?

We will deal together and in solidarity with any potential



legal consequences of the blockades. We will evaluate and finalise our campaign at a subsequent meeting, but the already accomplished broad cooperation between different political tendencies will surely be effective for much longer than the actual summit. Our concept of civil disobedience will also be of further value – be it at the next Castor or at the next Nazi demonstration.

One thing is obvious: The G8 are (only) one symbol of a worldwide system that does not give a shit about people's needs. To change this situation, we have to be active and resist in all spheres of life – also after the G8.

What will happen when the blockades are evicted?

The police will demand, three times, that the location/ street should be vacated before they evict. The blockade will still only remain a minor administrative offence (like parking in the wrong place) if you remain sitting or standing in the blockade after the third demand. This only changes if you resist a possible eviction.

Are you opponents of globalisation?

No. In contrast to right-wing G8-opponents, we are not against globalisation as such – we stand for a globalisation from below, for equal social, political and cultural rights for all, for the right to free global movement, for the responsible use of global resources, for a guarantee of public spaces and goods and for global social justice.

