

An Open Letter to the Press Rostock, G8 2007:

There is Something Terribly Wrong Here

Here in Germany, as major protests begin against the G8, the world press is not looking beyond the story of the battle – a partial story at best – and asking how or why it is happening.

Summit after summit, we have seen the same pattern in the media. The images of black clad protestors hurling rocks at police, the stories of senseless hooligans—those whom the government says should be punished and locked away.

These stories and images of street fighting do nothing but spread fear, criminalize protests, divide social movements, and distract the public from the story of the G8 and their unaccountable polices that are spreading militarism, poverty, violence, environmental destruction and climate change.

It is easy to condemn those who throw a rock or burn a car, but most of what we are seeing in Rostock is police blatantly provoking violence, using that same violence to justify ever more heavy-handed repression. Each day we are experiencing constant harassment, searches and humiliation imposed on us in the streets and on bikes, trains and borders, with no evidence of crime.

According to an official statement 13,000 police were present in Rostock on Saturday – all were well-armed and wearing lots of protective gear. There were small bands of police running into crowds, pushing, shoving and encircling protestors in a legally permitted rally. We saw nonviolent protestors who were trying to de-escalate the situation bludgeoned with batons and pepper sprayed. We saw huge water cannons infused with toxic chemicals spraying indiscriminately. Why is the press not reporting these acts of violence by the police? If violence makes such good headlines, why does the violence of poverty created by G8 policy go un-condemned?

Perhaps we might begin to understand if we look deeper. We may see that such violent confrontations have become a symptom of social and economic systems that values property over life, prisons over education, sprawl over sustainability, borders over migration, war over peace. We might see that it is in the interest of the police and the G8 to have such street fights, to justify the 90 million euros spent on security (in Germany alone). We might understand that repression and the violence of police is designed to thwart democracy and silence dissent.

But we who oppose the G8 will not be silent and we not be stopped. We understand that things are terribly wrong and that without such protests our voices will not be heard at all. For ongoing independent coverage of events near Rostock: de.indymedia.org