

ACTION OPEN LETTER / BAIL-OFF-ACTIONS

Further imprisonments for Actions of Civil Disobedience at the German Nuclear Weapons Base near Büchel in the southern Eifel

(Up to now 23 members of the Initiatives
“Gewaltfreie Aktion Atomwaffen Abschaffen” and “EUCOMmunity”
have been jailed)

Martin Otto (GA Atomwaffen Abschaffen)
Frankenstr. 77, D-35578 Wetzlar
April 2009

Hello,

This letter is addressed to all opponents of nuclear weapons.

On August 30, 2008 more than 2000 persons protested in Büchel against the stationing of US-nuclear bombs at the local Air Base of the Bundeswehr. Nina Hagen and others gave a concert of solidarity at the main gate. As part of the same event, about 30 nonviolent activists, organized in affinity groups, got arrested by the police when they tried to climb over the fence of the military area. We did not only demonstrate, but intended to dramatize our protest through an action of non-violent civil disobedience.

One of the groups consisted of seven women and men from Belgium. This is the only affinity group who will have to appear in criminal court for their Go-In action. Three of them succeeded in entering the military area, where they were arrested. The four others were put in custody by the police for “complicity”. Both parts of the group were charged by the local Court in Cochem: they are accused of trespassing, and have to pay 150 Euro each; or, if they don't pay, go to jail for 15 days.

They are not willing to pay, because their action is justified as an action against the illegal storage of nuclear weapons. In contradiction to (violation of?) International law, Germany maintains the system of “Tornado” airplanes prepared for nuclear weapons use. German pilots are training to use them in war.

The activists from Belgium do not intend to pay their fines, but to participate at another action in Büchel. There they want to present themselves to the German police. It is possible that they will be put in jail immediately.

It has happened 23 times previously that persons from “Gewaltfreien Aktion Atomwaffen Abschaffen” or “EUCOMmunity” convicted of nonviolent actions did not pay, but went instead to prison to start the term to which they were sentenced.

These “vigils behind prison bars” are seen as a continuation of the actions of Civil Disobedience against the Nuclear Weapons Policy.

In most of these cases, people in solidarity with the imprisoned collected money to bail them out after few days. In Open Letters to the persons in political responsibility they made their support public.

This is what shall happen in the actual case of the nonviolent activists from Belgium.
Therefore, every opponent of nuclear weapons who will read this letter is asked to do the following:

Please sign the Declaration of Content to the Open Letter written to the German Chancellor and other persons to whom it is addressed. (You will find the Open Letter and a list for signatures below). When returning the list with signatures, add an amount of money. Each signature accompanied by a donation, no matter how small it is, counts.

Collect more signatures and more donations among your relatives and neighbours.

Please return the lists of signatures and the money before June 30, 2009 to:

Martin Otto, Frankenstr. 77, D-35578 Wetzlar (Germany).

It should be shown on the list which person donated which amount of money.

If you do not want to send money by mail, you can transfer it to the bank account of the DFG-VK Lahn-Dill, Nr. 505981-607, at the Postbank Frankfurt, BLZ 50010060, using the code word: “Freikauf”.

With this open letter action the signatories make it clear that they do not only support an appeal. Their participation in bailing out the prisoners of conscience helps reduce the punishment which the state has given to nonviolent activists. All signatories will therefore “commit” a legal act of thwarting punishment. They counter the intention of the state to deter actions of Civil Disobedience and set a positive signal for further nonviolent actions.

As I write these sentences, (end of April 2009), the punishment of the Belgian comrades is not yet enforced, because they objected to the orders of punishment. It is theoretically possible – but unlikely – that the punishments will not be legally enforced. In this case all of the signatories will surely agree that the money be given to “Gewaltfreie Aktion Atomwaffen Abschaffen” to be used for their work towards a nuclear weapons free world.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in former actions to pay for someone’s release!

Thank you in advance to everybody participating in this “Open Letter Action”.

Martin Otto
(Gewaltfreie Aktion Atomwaffen Abschaffen)

Appendix 1

Translation of the Open Letter to be signed

*authorized representative for responses:
Martin Otto, Frankenstr. 77, 35578 Wetzlar*

OPEN LETTER

... 2009

*to the chancellor Bundeskanzlerin Frau Merkel
to the foreign minister Bundesaußenminister Herrn Steinmeier
to the minister for justice Bundesjustizministerin Frau Zypries
to the minister for defence Bundesverteidigungsminister Herrn Jung
to the ambassador of the USA in Berlin
to the public prosecutors office Staatsanwaltschaft Koblenz
to the district court Amtsgericht Cochem (Aktenzeichen 2090 Js 69079/08 and six further
criminal proceedings with the same reproach of trespassing in the Nuclear weapons base of
Büchel/Südeifel om August 30, 2008)*

***Threatened taking into custody No. 24 bis 30
of participants of actions organized by the Initiatives
“Gewaltfreie Aktion Atomwaffen Abschaffen” und “EUCOMmunity”***

In the last 15 years, 23 persons have been taken into custody in German prisons, because they participated in nonviolent actions to protest against the nuclear weapons policy.

Now, seven new criminal proceedings against opponents of nuclear weapons from Belgium are underway. They entered, or tried to enter, the area of the Bundeswehr air base at Büchel, where U.S. Nuclear bombs are stationed.

We, the signatories, appeal to the recipients of this letter:

Please make an effort to:

- 1. abolish all nuclear weapons, beginning with those owned by the U.S. And stored in Germany. ATOMWAFFEN ABSCHAFFEN – BEI UNS ANFANGEN!*
- 2. end the criminal proceedings against persons, who were struggling with means of nonviolent actions of civil disobedience (which means actions that break laws to a limited extent, without threatening the life and health of others) to abolish nuclear weapons.*
- 3. rehabilitate and compensate persons who were punished because of those actions.*

Every signatory of this appeal will at the same time give a small financial contribution for the case that again, nonviolent activists should be put in custody. If possible and wished by those imprisoned, their time in jail will be reduced by paying for their release.

This is an open letter, whose text and names of signatories will also be sent to different press agencies with the aim to be published.

Appendix 2

Declaration of Content and list of signatures

I do agree that my name and place of residence (as listed below) under the text of the open letter from ... 2009 to the chancellor, three German ministers, legal authorities and the press are published.

I do also agree that a possible monetary surplus intended to pay for the release from prison will be transferred to the "Gewaltfreie Aktion Atomwaffen Abschaffen", and will be used for their further work towards a nuclear weapon-free world.

1. _____
Name, Prenom Street, No.

Postal code, Town Signature Donation for the
release of prisoners

2. _____
Name, Prenom Street, No.

Postal code, Town Signature Donation for the
release of prisoners

3. _____
Name, Prenom Street, No.

Postal code, Town Signature Donation for the
release of prisoners

4. _____
Name, Prenom Street, No.

Postal code, Town Signature Donation for the
release of prisoners

5. _____
Name, Prenom Street, No.

Postal code, Town Signature Donation for the
release of prisoners

6.

Name, Prenom

Street, No.

Postal code, Town

Signature

Donation for the
release of prisoners

7.

Name, Prenom

Street, No.

Postal code, Town

Signature

Donation for the
release of prisoners

7.

Name, Prenom

Street, No.

Postal code, Town

Signature

Donation for the
release of prisoners

8.

Name, Prenom

Street, No.

Postal code, Town

Signature

Donation for the
release of prisoners

9.

Name, Prenom

Street, No.

Postal code, Town

Signature

Donation for the
release of prisoners

10.

Name, Prenom

Street, No.

Postal code, Town

Signature

Donation for the
release of prisoners

Please return signatures and donations before June 30, 2009

to Martin Otto, Frankenstraße 77, D-35578 Wetzlar
