In the middle of the protest, something new emerged:

Final declaration of the FC⚡MC – International Media Center during G20 in Hamburg

On 4 July 2017 at 18hrs, the time had come. The media center FC⚡MC at and against the G20 summit in Hamburg started working. Every day, a press conference of those criticising the summit took place on the South stand of the FC St. Pauli stadium, by the drone of the helicopters above as accompaniment. The diverse protests - from demonstrations to blockades to dance events - were supplimented with online media. In addition, there was a live stream with FC⚡MC's own content. Journalists were provided with work spaces.

The FC⚡MC understood itself as a singular media intervention, to sound out the possibilities of critical reporting during the days of a state of emergency. In this short contribution we want to convey however incompletely, what the FC⚡MC as an open, collective experiment achieved, and what it didn't.

At best, our thoughts can instigate future arguments.

A platform for all

At the daily press conferences, activists spoke about the protest actions as well as about the G20 summit and the neo-liberal profit-thinking it promotes. Voices from the global South, especially, spoke up. It was a conscious decision to keep the platform open ensuring that the protest movement could not be split into «good», peaceful and «bad», violent protesters. We are convinced that the FC⚡MC provided an important contribution to prevent such a split, and that it also contributed to a better understanding of the authoritarian consequences of the state of emergency. The idea of a critical pluralism, that understands how to offer a common platform to different protest movements is already expressed in the pluriform naming of the media center: Forget Capitalism, Flowing Communards, Fruitful Collaborations, Friends of Critic and Future Culture are just a few of the many possible names that the FC⚡MC bore.

You have the know-how

The media center FC⚡MC was not run by a political group, it developed before and during the protests out of a temporary, open, social collaboration of different networks. Computer technicians, artists, journalists, photographers, but also cooks, they all brought in their expertise. The slogan was: Federation of Competences. The FC⚡MC did not know a hierarchy, and up to the end we still didn't know what an editorial board in the context of the FC⚡MC actually is. It was impressive for us to see how the knowledge and expertise of the individuals came together and how a place for diverse reporting evolved. The FC⚡MC productively used the G20 state of emergency to establish an improbable singularity, in all the madness around us during the week, it was formed by collective practices generating different functionalities. What was planned sometimes didn't happen, and lot of what happened was unplanned. We did not measure clicks and still don't know what effectiveness is. Instead, the FC⚡MC as a whole raised the question what critical reporting in the context of a G20 could be and provided diverse offers.

In good neighboorhoud

Without the support of the FC St. Pauli, the FC⚡MC would not have been possible in the way it took place. The stadium was a safe place around the clock. This retreat for journalistic work was used by media makers in different ways. Hamburg's political and art scene brought their experiences in trying out new forms of resistance and practical material. Those arriving were greeted with openness; in the media center there was an atmosphere of curiosity and trust. We are sure that an internationally oriented resistance is even more possible when it knows the respective city maps.

The weapons of the police

Already before the G20 summit, politicians and authorities had put forward their story of the threat of civil war like situations in the trade city. During the protests, the police contributed to the escalation by repeatedly breaking the law and by an unknown number of deployed forces. We especially want to highlight the close cooperation of the three branches of the state that are usually described as separate because also the so-called fourth estate - the press - was co-opted into this authoritarian exercise. The PR of the authorities was a strong weapon, for example when it massively inflated the numbers of injured police in order to discredit the protests, and it was used as a whole and continuously to influence the press through false reports - partly quite successful. Looking back, we are angry that we didn't plan for this obvious dramaturgy into our reporting.

Successful

Numerous reports could be sent out in the live stream, documenting the forms and demands of the protests in their whole breadth. For this, videos, images and text from the street could be handed in, and the FC⚡MC also made its own reports. Special attention was given to preserving personal rights while working with the material. But also questions of how to deal with problematic meta data of the media files or attempts to smuggle computer viruses into the system were taken into account in the infrastructure. The mixed success of our work lead us to the conclusion that the idea of a counterpublic - around since May 68 - is no longer useful, but that we need to think of new strategies, to win the fight of the images in a mass-media-public. An end to riot porn. It is still an open question whether an emancipatory image politics in the context of such large-scale events is even possible. We have learned that this question has to be asked time and time again, because an answer to this can only be found in a concrete collective practice.

Buenos Aires

The next G20 summit takes place from 30 November till 1 December 2018 in Buenos Aires in Argentina. We would be happy, to give our collected knowledge for the reporting to interested activists or contribute to another alternative media center.