

Anti Repression Leaflet

Dealing With Image Material Of Demos And How To Act In The Case Of An Arrest

Media Activism

Filming, photographing and interviewing during a demonstration is looked on as an action, on par with graffitiing, speaking or carrying the front banner. You are not seen as an outsider but as part of the protest.

Because firstly you are part of the action and secondly your captured material can be very useful for the cops, you may become a specific target in police action. From previous experiences activists with cameras were specifically picked out of protest by the police and their material was confiscated (sometimes even from their houses after the event). These materials can be used as evidence by judicial authorities.

As film maker or photographer you hold responsibility for your recorded material so you are needed to treat it accordingly. You are part of the collective action! It would be good for you to bring up ideas and your intentions on publishing your materials upfront. Places for this might be at meetings, solidarity parties and discussions. The idea is not for lots of people to create their private demo memoirs. Instead we want media activism to be an integral part of the protest against the G8 at Heiligendamm.

Your camera is a witness in delicate situations like arrests and fights. The knowledge that a situation is recorded can have a deescalating effect. Make use of this!

Practicalities

Do not act individually, always in a group. Just as when people are graffitiing, make sure there is protection from police action organised.

Sort out transportation to and from the protest/action beforehand.

Think about the image material you want to capture before you go ahead. It is very risky to film or photograph actions, even more so if they are illegal and your material can potentially put others in danger.

Keep on checking if you are recording useful information or simply depictions of a spectacle. The protection of those you are recording has always got to be top priority.

Speak to the people you are recording and make sure that they want to be photographed or filmed or if they are happy with having these pictures of themselves published.

Anonymity

Almost everywhere in Germany it is against the law to cover your face at a demonstration. This means that the argument "whoever does not want to be recognised can cover up" is not viable. There are plenty of reasons why people cover up at protests like repression, fascists to name but a few, this does not mean that those who do not would like to find large format images of themselves published. The faces of individuals do not have to be recognisable in your material to capture the atmosphere or

political content of a protest. You can also photograph the backs of people. Try to think about what it is you are looking to show whilst you are photographing or filming.

You might want to put their material up on the web because it will become accessible to a lot of people. With the internet being such a fast paced medium you will not want to lose any time. But always take the time before each publication to make the faces in your material unrecognisable. Most importantly put the black bar over the eyes; police may measure the distance between the eyes to identify an individual.

Pixelating, blurring and blacking out faces is part of film editing. If you need any technical support you could have a look at www.videoactivism.de

Additional Advice

Filming/Photographing

Change the tape/ chip card frequently and if possible record each action or protest on a separate tape/ chip card. In any case always change the tape or card after recording delicate images and pass the material to someone you trust, who can safeguard it.

What to do if despite all caution there is an arrest.

- Try to film the arrest for as long as possible. This can be useful to reconstruct a situation afterwards.
- Theoretically your press card should protect you from having to hand over your material to the police. However previous experiences have shown that cops do not always respect these rights.
- If it becomes apparent that the police are after your material try to make it disappear or destroy it before they can get their hands on it.
- Always ask for a receipt from the police for the confiscated material. They may still have “accidentally lost it” when you return to collect it but you will have proof that they actually took it off you.
- Immediately demand that the confiscated material is sealed. This will happen at the police station and means that the stuff is placed in a sealed container. Also demand a receipt stating that the material has been sealed. If charges are brought against you, the police would have to inform you that they want to view the material and this you can appeal against.
- Make use of your right to remain silent! Outside of showing ID and stating your registered address you are not obliged to say anything, even if they say otherwise. Do not let yourself get caught up in a conversation, not about the filming/photographing or anything else.
- It is useful to draw up an account of what has happened immediately (during the first calm moments) after an arrest or interrogation by the police. In it also describe the appearance of the policeman who dealt with you as your memory will blur with time.

Last but not Least:

- Even CCTVs don't last forever: Reclaim Your Media!