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“Not Our War”

Documentation of an Event on the Occasion of the 100th Birthday of War Resisters International War Resisters from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia

10.09.2022, De Kargadoor, Utrecht, Netherlands

Editor: Stephan Brües



Dieses Papier enthält die Beiträge einer Veranstaltung in Utrecht am 10.9.2021, die anlässlich des 100. Geburtstag der War Resisters' International stattfand. Hauptthema war Kriegsdienstverweigerung im Krieg gegen die Ukraine.

This paper includes the contributions to an event in Utrecht on the 10.9.2022 which took place celebrating the 100th birthday of War Resisters' International. The main topic was conscientious objection in the war against Ukraine.

Stephan Brües (ed.): „Not Our War“. Documentation of an Event on the Occasion of the 100th Birthday of War Resisters International. War Resisters from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia

Photos: Stephan Brües unless otherwise indicated

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Introduction

Stephan Brües

It was a long way, but an event took place on 10.09.2022 in Utrecht, not far from the founding place of the international network War Resister' International (WRI) in Bilthoven, on the occasion of the 100th birthday of WRI. Opponents of war from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine said: "Not our war". (The birthday was in 2021, but due to the pandemics the event had to be postponed to 2022.)

Prehistory

The year 2021 as the centenary of WRI and how to celebrate it in the country of its foundation, i.e., the Netherlands, was discussed in earlier WRI Council meetings. However, it was already clear at that time that the peace movement in the Netherlands was currently too small to set up something bigger like a two-day festival without the help of neighbouring countries. After an international conference of WRI in Bogota in 2019, some activists from the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium got together to plan an event to be held in 2021.

A group was founded that included from the Netherlands Frank Feiner, Wilbert Hesloet, Reinoud Douschout, Ben Lindeman, Mark Akkerman, Egbert Wever, Jan Ruysenaars and Carla Schoenmakers, and from the German side, in addition to Stephan Brües, initially Kai-Uwe Dosch and David Scheuing. First, May/June, then September 2021 was planned as the date of the event. Finally, it was decided to schedule the event exactly one year later, for 09.09.-11.09.2022. Utrecht was chosen as the largest city near the founding site at Bilthoven. The original plan was to address nonviolent resistance in countries such as Colombia, West Papua (former Dutch colony) as well as retrospectives on WRI founders and activists such as Bart de Ligt or Helene Stöcker.

From Future Without War to "Not Our War"



But all this needed money. And the fundraising unfortunately didn't work at all. Eventually, money was enough for a one-day event that was supposed to focus on the current situation in and around Ukraine and provide a forum for opponents of war. So, "Future Without War", as it was announced, became "Not Our War".

High-profile activists such as Yurii Sheliashenko (Pacifist Movement of Ukraine), Olga Karatch (Our House, Belarus, currently in exile in Lithuania) and Alex Belik (Movement of COs in Russia, in exile in Estonia) as well as Rudi Friedrich (Connection e.V.), Mark Akkerman (Stop Wapenhandel) and Christine Schweitzer (Federation for Social Defence) looked at the resistance against the war in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, the solidarity work for this resistance, the war profiteers and alternatives to war.

Presentations

Yurii Sheliashenko made it clear that the war in Ukraine must end immediately and pointed out that the rudimentary legislation on the right to Conscientious Objection (CO) has now been suspended. Ukrainian men are thus not only not allowed to leave the country, but they are also not allowed to refuse military service. In a poem, he held a mirror up to the ridiculous war propaganda on all sides of the war.

Olga Karatch has with "Our House" launched an appeal on social media immediately after the Russian army invaded Ukraine, calling on young Belarusians not to obey the draft notices and instead to flee or go into hiding. The video was liked or forwarded hundreds of thousands of times. Of the 42,000 young men who received a draft notice in the spring 2022, 20,000 refused to comply and fled. Olga demanded that EU member states create a humanitarian corridor for objectors from Belarus and Russia as well as Ukraine and provide protection for all.

Alex Belik from the CO Movement of Russia spoke of 100,000 young Russians having fled to Georgia and Turkey, many of them possibly to avoid conscription into the army. Alex advises many COs as a lawyer and works with the Finnish CO movement.

Rudi Friedrich from Connection e.V. presented the solidarity work of the peace movement in Germany and pointed out the inadequate admission procedure for COs, deserters and draft evaders.

Mark Akkerman spoke about the profiteers of the Ukraine war from the arms industry, which is not only expressed in the concrete arms deliveries, e.g. to Ukraine, but also in the massive rearmament plans of almost all states worldwide, which makes the champagne corks fly in the offices of the weapons' manufacturers.

Christine Schweitzer talked about the challenges pacifists have always faced in opposing war, and addressed nonviolent alternatives to war - Social Defence and the concept of Unarmed Civilian Protection.

After dinner and an introduction to a peace policy game by Nina Koevoets from Peace.Power.org, there were workshops, in which the 30-40 participants could ask questions and discuss in the Kargadoor Cultural Centre.

Unfortunately, the implementation of two parallel workshops by the online-connected Yurii and Alex did not work out, so that these workshops had to be unsatisfactorily merged. Unfortunately, streaming did not work out either.

Nevertheless, the content of the event was so inspiring that we decided to document it in this Background-and Discussion Paper.

We regret however that we cannot document the witty facilitation of Frank van Schaik and the texts of the songs by Your Local Pirates.

I wish you an inspiring lecture.

Stephan Brües is co-chair of the Federation for Social Defence and co-organizer of the event "Not Our War".

The program

War Resisters in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia say:

“Not Our War”

Information, Workshops, Music & More



Saturday, 10. September 2022, 16.00 – 22.30

Price: € 20 for the whole program including dinner (not beverages)

Kargadoor, Oudegracht 36, Utrecht

Get Your ticket here:



Changes in program may occur

16.00 – 18.00

Grote Zaal

Presentations
(max. 10 minutes each)

This part and the workshop of Yuriy Shelia-zhenko are streamed on the Youtube Channel “Right to Refuse to kill” by War Resisters International (WRI) and Connection: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0WZGT6i5H014oLAug2n0Nw>

The other workshops will be recorded so that it can be approached on that channel and the facebook video site of WRI later.

18.00 – 19.30

Foyer near Grote Zaal

19.30 – 21.00

Grote Zaal, Room 1+2
Workshops

21.00 – 22.30

Grote Zaal

Listen to Peace Activists and War Resisters!

Facilitator: *Frank van Schaik*

Music: *Your Local Pirates*; **Poetry:** *Stephan Brües*

- a) **Online:** Pacifist Movement of Ukraine: Resisting War from inside Ukraine
by Yuriy Shelia-zhenko (Kiev, Ukraine)
- b) Nash Dom/Our House, Belarus/Lithuania: No means No! No Men for War
by Olga Karatch (Belarus, exiled in Vilnius, Lithuania)
- c) **Online:** Movement of Conscientious Objectors of Russia
by Alex Belik (Russia, exiled in Tallinn, Estonia)
- d) War Resisters in Russia and how to support them
by Rudi Friedrich (Connection, Offenbach, Germany)
- e) War Profiteers from the Ukraine War
by Mark Akkerman (Stop Wapenhandel, Amsterdam)
- f) **Online:** Nonviolent Alternatives to War
by Dr. Christine Schweitzer (Federation for Social Defence, Minden/Hamburg, Germany)

Dinner & more

Presenting a game and book on Peace and Nonviolence *by Nina Koevoets*

Human Corridors for War Resisters
by Olga Karatch

Solidarity with War Resisters in Russia
by Rudi Friedrich & Alex Belik

Online from Kiev:
Resisting War from inside Ukraine
by Yuriy Shelia-zhenko

Offers:

Open talks, Round Dance against War & Dictatorship, Music, Films & more

Yurii Sheliashenko, Pacifist Movement of Ukraine



Photo: EBCO; Yurii with a Greek peace activist, 18.08.2022, in front of the memorial for Mahatma Gandhi in Kiev

Dear friends,

thank you for coming today and for caring about peace on Earth.

Sorry for being online, not in person, it is because our very, very, very democratic President Zelenskyy, apart from his repressions against the opposition, prohibits all males from leaving the country and turns young men into cannon fodder against their will, rejecting all popular petitions against this cruel policy.

Human right to conscientious objection to military service during military mobilization is not recognized contrary to international law, so people mostly are hiding from military recruiters and their hunting for conscripts.

I plan to talk in detail about anti-war resistance in Ukraine during my workshop in Grote Zaal, I invite you to attend it. We must resist the system of war, which Russia, Belarus and Ukraine inherited from Soviet Union, the system in which people from childhood are prepared to become obedient soldiers and professional killers, not free, creative, peace-loving citizens.

To illustrate this problem, I will play to you a video about 'Militarization of children in Ukraine':

(Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XTMa7_SM6c)



We hold this event under wonderful mottos: "Future Without War" and "Not Our War."

All people in the world have great sages calling for peace. If only people listen!

A century ago, War Resisters' International was founded in The Netherlands, but several centuries earlier a wise son of this land, Erasmus of Rotterdam, said: "The most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war".

Belarussian writer, Nobel laureate Svetlana Alexievich, once very well noted that "*any war is still a murder.*"

Genius of Russian literature Leo Tolstoy wrote: "*Instead of the national hatreds that are*

poisoned us under the guise of patriotism, we must teach children the horror and contempt of the military career, which serves to divide men."

And a poem of Ukrainian writer Ivan Franko says: "Azure sky is clean and nice, when bloody war inhuman ends in peace."

I wrote a poem entitled "Ridiculous war" to explain why any war is incompatible with common sense and how much better could be a world without armies, borders, and wars. You will hear this poem in the next video.

Ridiculous War



A poem translated from Ukrainian, video: <https://youtu.be/7TC6cG0synl>

*Too many fairy tales of war
For killers' glory told.
This story of another sort:
How laughter made war stop.*

*Imagine life in times of dove
When peace in minds prevails.
United Earth embraced by love
And everyone are friends.*

*A couple of friends had wish insane
Divide and rule all lands.
So Anti put on East his name,
And Super got her West.*

*They signed peace treaty with a pledge
To leave alone each other
On Anti-people's father-land
And Super-people's land-mother.*

*Those Anti, Super – chosen dudes.
To them, obey and pay!
Ask humbly from your own tributes
Some means to live today.*

*They promise, promise you a lot
In words, fine coins, on paper.
You found that your soul is sold,
All souls are sold together.*

*Trust blindly, you belong to us.
If not, you enemy, weep!
The Super-people kick people's asses
And Anti-people beat people.*

*Fellows tired of blood and gore
Instead of promised miracle.
They asked Anti what he's for.
They said Super, she's equal.*

*Facing good people, rulers went mad,
Called patriots be martyrs;
Super pre-emptively self-defended
From self-defence of Anti.*

*So Super-people and Anti-people
Turned armed and hating crowds:
Anti-heroes to kill and cripple,
Super-heroic liars.*

*Both armies marched to the war!
One soul on middle ground
Thought common sense need to return,
Set free enslaved crowds.*

*Both Super-crowd and Anti-crowd
Told to shoot, not stare...
A good joke made them all to laugh:
"War – super-anti-fair!"
People's laughter shaken sky and land.
Fake gods of war were gone.
All people on Earth were friends again
Enjoying peace at home.*

*Too many fairy tales of war
For killers' glory told.
But this one only have a worth:
How laughter made war stop.*

Propaganda of war is always absurd and ridiculous.

In Russia so-called special military operation is presented as revival of greatness. What kind of greatness could killers have?

In Ukraine the war against Russian invasion is advertised as foundation of national identity. If our sense of life is to kill the enemy, as militarists claim, then paradoxically life have no sense: if we are defeated, we can't do that, and if we are victorious, we will eliminate our sense of life, unless we declare war to ourselves.

Both Russia and Ukraine claim fast and total victory on the battlefield is near, under this pretext peace talks are ruled out, in result the bloodshed is turning into endless war of attrition devastating economies of belligerents and whole the world economy. It is utter absurd.

Western media make people to take side of Ukraine, as they say, the side of victims against aggressor. It is true that Putin's Russia is aggressor state, but I urge you that Ukrainian

militarized right-wing authoritarianism is too ugly and cruel to take its side. True victims of this war are not warmongering governments in Moscow and Kyiv, not their armies which commit war crimes with impunity on both sides of the frontline, true victims are innocent civilians on both sides thrown into meat grinder of war against their will. Civilians who want to remain civilians should deserve your support and solidarity, not the militarists and their organized killing.

We must resist the war system, not the demonized enemies. We need common-sensical peace journalism instead of propaganda of war and hatred to enemy. We need diplomacy instead of arms race. We need investments into social and environmental welfare, education, and healthcare, to deal with hunger and climate change, instead of inflating NATO and nuclear stockpiles. European countries should grant asylum to conscientious objectors and deserters from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.

I believe that we live in the time when humankind have a great potential to abolish war and establish nonviolent society, but also there is a big danger of self-destruction in the competition of great powers of the East and West for global dominance. We must choose whether we abolish war or war will abolish us. It is a matter of simple rational choice. We must choose wisely.

War in Ukraine demonstrates how true was a declaration of war resisters adopted in Bilt-hoven in 1921: "*War is a crime against humanity; therefore, I am determined not to support any kind of war and to strive for the removal of all causes of war*".

Let's uphold our right to refuse to kill, stop all wars in the world, and build peace together.
Peace, Yurii

Yurii Sheliashenko is Executive Secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement and a board member of the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) as well as of the global organization "World beyond War", see <https://worldbeyondwar.org/yurii/>, incl. some videos and interviews with him.

He obtained a Master of Mediation and Conflict Management in 2021 and a Master of Laws in 2016 at KROK University.

In addition, he is journalist, blogger, human rights defender, and legal scholar, author of academic publications and a lecturer on legal theory and history.

Olga Karatch, Nash Dom – Our House, Belarus



About Nash Dom (Our house)

Nash Dom was created in 2002 with a magazine of the same name. It was founded by Olga Karatch in Vitebsk. Nash Dom has been present at the national level since 2008 and has now teams in 15 cities.



The goal of Nash Dom is to educate the public in the field of basic human rights by providing concrete practical support to active people in civil, legal, and constitutional situations in conflict with the Belarusian authorities. Nash Dom organizes on-site public meetings to solve communal problems, such as maintenance of public infrastructure and joint social activities. Nash Dom advocates for the civil rights of people in Belarus. They act against corrupt officials and government officials through public information campaigns. It campaigns against the unlawful and human rights violating conditions in prisons and other state institutions and supports activists when they become victims of state repression and violence, and repeatedly exposes abuses in Belarusian politics.

In February 2022, when Putin's army invaded Ukraine, Nash Dom began its campaign "NO means NO". 20.000 young men fled from being incorporated into the army and go to help Putin to suppress Ukraine. Mainly to Georgia and Turkey, some to Poland and Lithuania, where the activists from Nash Dom were exiled to.

One activity is a video flash mob see: <https://youtu.be/SfsxSlYiAQY>.

See more on English website <https://news.house/>

Stephan Brües: Introducing Olga Karatch With a Poem of His Own

With the following poem I want to introduce Olga Karatch and the work of her organization Nash Dom. The organization that I represent (Federation for Social Defense, BSV) is working with Nash Dom since 2005:

Nash Dom - Our house

Our house has many rooms

for tenants who suffer under the arbitrariness of the administration,

for mothers whose sons are tortured and locked away for alleged drug possession,

for people who are persecuted by the police,

for people who want to solve conflicts with others without violence,

for pupils who want to settle disputes

Our house has many doors

Real and virtual.

The first ones protect the persecuted.

The second show the arbitrariness of the henchmen.

All lead to more freedom

All lead to more knowledge about civil rights.

All lead to more action for civil rights.

Our House calls "No means No" - No to the war on Ukraine!

It calls for opposing the lies of war with the truth.

*It calls for the withdrawal of men from the Belarusian army.
It calls for no participation in Putin's war.
It calls on the young conscripts,
to flee to the Owls, the resistant women.*

*The Owls are calling mothers en masse,
to stop them from sending their sons to Ukraine.
And the sons refuse to go to Ukraine.
The general of the armed forces resigned from his post in frustration.
His pleading with the soldiers had led to no result.
No remained No.
Imagine it's war,
and - where no one thought it would happen, in Belarus - nobody comes.*

Presentation by Olga Karatch

No means NO: we want to steal the army from Aleksandr Lukashenko

Let's block a second front in Ukraine
with non-violent tools together



Objectives of NMN campaign

- The **main goal** of the campaign is helping Belarusian conscientious objectors to **refuse en masse** to participate to the army / to the war in Ukraine on Putin's side
- 1. To **demilitarize** the Belarusian army, to **deprive** Aleksandr Lukashenka of the most important resource in the war - the human resource. How can he participate if he will just have nobody who to use for fighting?
- 2. To **demoralize** the Russian army, that will be shocked that Belarusians are not just unwilling to fight, but are also escaping in large numbers from war and military actions to the Belarusian women. That is, mistrust will grow inside the army between Russians and Belarusians: not only they will have to kill Ukrainians, but also to keep watch over Belarusians so that they won't run away.
- 3. To **mobilize** the protest potential and the protest electorate of Belarus against the war and for non-participation in the war efforts against Ukraine.

This will become a fresh impetus and a second wind to the Belarusian protest,
as we need an army of volunteers working directly with the Belarusian society.



What happens if this campaign "No means NO" is not implemented?

1. On September 18, 2022 Alexander Lukashenko declares an amnesty for "runaway slaves".
 - This means that about 20,000 young men from the previous spring-2022 conscription will return home and go into the army. These conscientious objectors fled to Georgia and Turkey in spring 2022 because they did not want to go to the army, but did not get visas and support, and they will not be able to survive financially in Turkey and Georgia in autumn, outside the tourist season, with huge prices for accommodation. This means that Lukashenko will get about 20,000 soldiers.
1. The Belarusian army will begin to take part in the war. It is not a question of "if", it is a question of "when". There are enough factors that speak of the preparation of the Belarusian army for the invasion of Ukraine.
2. A Second Front is opening up.
3. The violent conflict is escalating.
4. Thousands of new civilian casualties are being inflicted.
5. Relations between the Belarusian and Ukrainian people are spoilt for the next 100 years.



What does it take to make a campaign "No means NO" a success?



1. Political support from European politicians for this idea. There is none, because no one wants to do anything until the Second Front starts.
2. We need a humanitarian corridor for Belarusian conscientious objectors to the European Union (Poland). We are talking about 10-20-30 thousand young men at most. Poland has accepted 4 million Ukrainian refugees. This figure is small for the EU, especially when it comes to blocking the Second Front.
3. We need help in information campaign, first of all, to tell that Belarusian men have the right not to go to the army and what they need to do not to go there. We need to promote non-violent resistance.
4. We need help in strengthening the women's groups of Our House in exile, because it is women who will be able to convince their relatives not to go to the army and help their relatives to escape. Belarusian men will only believe Belarusian women, and we need to do everything we can to help them in this process.
5. The International Coalition of the Anti-War Movement with their knowledge and experience.

What's stopping it now?



- 1. A Belarusian conscientious objector cannot refuse to take part in the army.
 - 1.1 There is no alternative service in Belarus. If he refuses to take up arms, he still goes into the army unarmed, but is subject to additional torture and the risk of being killed by other soldiers.
 - 1.2. It is impossible to hide with relatives in Belarus. Belarus has established a video surveillance system for everyone and a facial recognition system. Even if a person changes their appearance, this IT system recognizes by their eyes. I.e. it is useless to go to another city - there the same system that easily identifies a fugitive. This system is overseen by the KGB and the police, hence the mass arrests of protesters in Belarus. Everyone who went out at all to take part in the protests has been identified, and artificial intelligence is now looking for them using this facial recognition system.

What's stopping it now?



- 1.3 It is not possible to obtain a visa for the European Union. For example, just to sign up for a visit to the Polish embassy a person has to pay a bribe of 500-1500 euro. And it is only an appointment for a visit (with no guarantee to get a visa). In other embassies the situation is even worse. Lithuanian embassy does not issue visas at all, except for some privileged people. But conscientious objectors are poor young men, they do not have that kind of money.
- 1.4 In Georgia and Turkey, conscientious objectors are either denied European visas or have to wait. There are about 20,000 wishing out of only Belarus refuseniks. The Polish embassy issues 50 visas a day. In other words, it is almost unrealistic for a young conscientious objector to get a visa to the European Union. They have no money, nothing to live on, no jobs in Georgia and Turkey (but in the EU).

We need you!



I am here because we need the international coalition to realize the campaign

Olga Karatch, born 1979 in Vitebsk, Belarus. Belarusian journalist, public figure, politician. Currently she lives in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Education: 2012: Master of Political Science, European Humanities University, Vilnius, Lithuania. 2002: Higher education, teacher of Russian language and literature, Belarusian language and literature, Vitebsk State University

Professional activity: 2005-nowadays: Director of the International Center for Civil Initiatives "Our House"

2002-2004: Teacher of English in secondary school No. 27 in Vitebsk, dismissed due to political activity (participation in the 2004 parliamentary elections)

2001: Teacher of Russian language and literature in the Gymnasium No. 1 in Vitebsk (in parallel receiving education at the university). Dismissed due to political activism (presidential election, 2001)

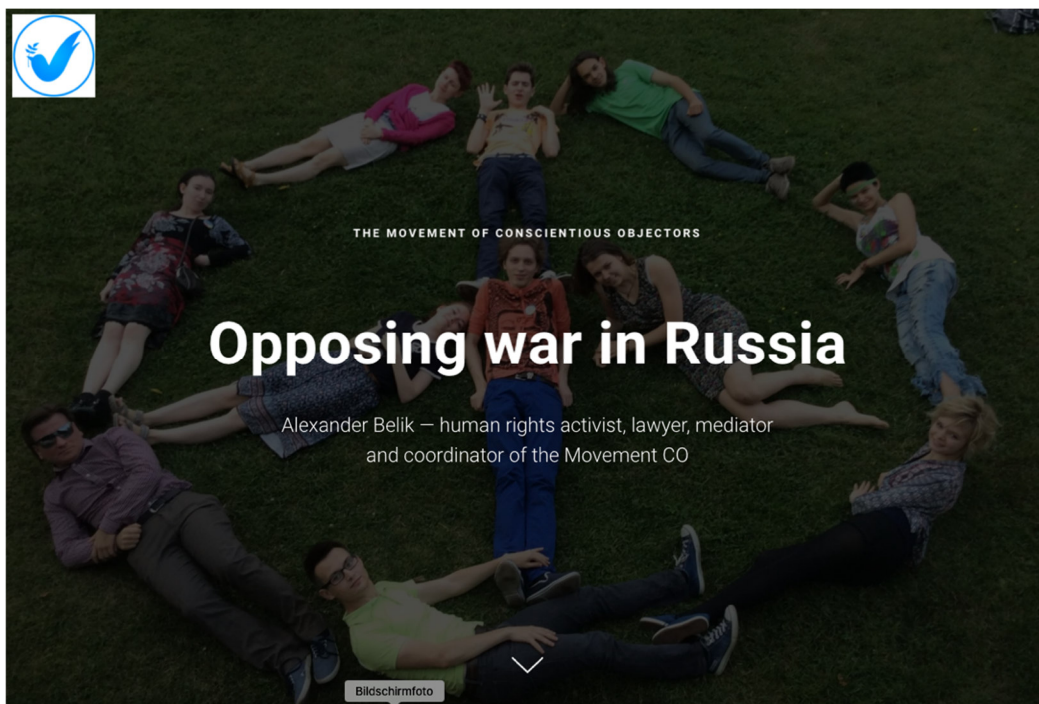
Social activity: August 2012 – nowadays: member of "Polish Press Club" in Warsaw, Poland. 2004-nowadays: "International Center for Gender Initiatives" Adliga: Women for Equal Civil Rights", co-chair.

1999-nowadays: member of Belarusian Association of Journalists.

Alex Belik, Movement of Conscientious Objectors of Russia



Photo: Private



Statement by the Movement of Conscientious Objectors of Russia (MCO) on February 24, 2022

1. What is happening in Ukraine is a war unleashed by Russia.
 2. The Movement of conscientious objectors considers Russia's military aggression unacceptable. We call for an immediate end to the war!
 3. The Movement of conscientious objectors urges Russian soldiers not to participate in hostilities. Don't become war criminals!
 4. The Movement of conscientious objectors calls for all conscripts to refuse to serve in the army: to apply for the alternative civil service, to be released on medical grounds.
- Russians refuse to fight in Ukraine

EUROPE

Russian contract soldiers increasingly jailed in occupied Donbas

Ever more Russian soldiers are refusing to fight Putin's war. Human rights activists report many "refuseniks" are being jailed in Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine where they are subjected to violence and abuse.

Russians are protesting

16437 detentions in connection with anti-war actions since February 24, 2022, according to [OVD-info data](#)

237 criminal cases in connection with anti-war actions since February 24, 2022, according to [OVD-info data](#)



All Photos: stoparmy.org

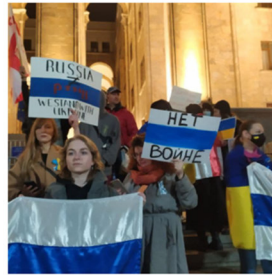
Sasha Skochilenko

On 31 March Skochilenko was arrested for "putting fragments of paper in place of price tags, containing knowingly false information about the use of the Russian armed forces" in a Perekrestok supermarket.

The messages attributed to her included information about Mariupol theatre airstrike on March 16: "The Russian army bombed an art school in Mariupol where about 400 people were hiding from the shelling."

Under the recently introduced Russian fake news laws she faces a sentence of up to 10 years imprisonment if found guilty.





All Photos: stoparmy.org

Movement of Conscious Objectors

Movement towards a free world without violence (Mission of MCO)

1. Army is not a prison, military duty is not an imprisonment
2. Alternative civil service
47% draftees have achieved replacement of military service with ACS,
46% were denied
7% face inaction from the Draft Commissions
10% win in courts after applications are denied
3. CO on medical reasons

Alex Belik, 25 years old, is lawyer, lived in St Petersburg and is member of the Movement of Conscientious Objectors of Russia. Since April 2022 he lives in Tallinn/Estonia.

He is working for the Finnish peace organization [Aseistakieltäytyjäliitto AKL](http://aseistakieltäytyjäliitto.org)

Work: 24. Sept. 2020 - today: supporter of the Russian Party Jablko, Sept. 2017 - today: lawyer at the Russian LGBT Network, St. Petersburg

7. October 2016 - today: Member of the Council of Observers, St. Petersburg

1. April 2016 - today: coordinator of the Movement of Conscientious Objectors of Russia

18. June 2017 - 7. Febr. 2020: Participant of the International Youth Human Rights Movement (YHRM)

7 June 2016 - 4 June 2019: Participant to Monitor legal proceedings by Civil Control

20 May 2016 - 7 Dec. 2017: lawyer at RosOtvvet (RosReport)

Higher Education

September 2021 - today: Master Studies "Empiric Law Studies", European University, St. Petersburg

2019: BA in "Jurisdiction" at State University of St. Petersburg

Rudi Friedrich, Connection e.V., Germany



Photo: Connection e.V.

Hello everyone. I am happy to be here with you today.

I want to tell you more about the issue of conscientious objection and asylum, especially in relation to the war in Ukraine.

I am Rudi Friedrich from Connection, a German-based organization that works for conscientious objectors and deserters worldwide.

On April 6 the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, addressed the Russian soldiers, saying: "I have just one message for the Russian soldiers on the battlefield: if you want no part in killing your Ukrainian brothers and sisters, then lay down your arms." Charles Michel, as president of the European Council, represents the heads of government of the European Union. He also noted in his statement that to grant them asylum would be a valuable idea.

It is already clear that with this one-sided statement he is taking a stand for the refusers of one side of the war. Presumably he understands the support of the Russian deserters as a means to act against the Russian aggression and thus as a part of the warfare. We as Connection see the war as aggression of Russia as well, however, we are concerned with all persons who, on whatever side, refuse to serve in the war. For us it's clear: desertion, draft evasion, conscientious objection, and refusal to obey orders is a significant part of the resistance to war.

At present, Ukrainian objectors and deserters get a humanitarian residence permit in the EU, a timely limited shelter. Currently they are not in danger. More to this in the workshop. While Ukrainian citizens get this status. Russian objectors and deserters are not safe. Almost nothing has happened since the statement of Charles Michel. Only some individual countries are offering ways to support them.

We had originally assumed that on the European level for them a regulation of the European legislation is relevant, the so-called Qualification Directive. It regulates who can be recognized as a refugee. There is a passage stating that refugee protection should be granted in cases of prosecution for refusing to participate in wars or actions that violate international law. That would be the case for Russian objectors and deserters. This could also be the case if, as Belarusian organizations have feared for months, Belarus also enters the war and sends its own troops to Ukraine.

The European Court of Justice, the highest court in the European Union, has already ruled twice on this passage of the Qualification Directive. This has defined a number of conditions which, in view of the current situation, make it unlikely that protection can actually be achieved for the persons concerned. They would have to have applied for conscientious objection to military service in advance, which was rejected or at least did not prevent them from being sent to the war. They would have to prove that they were recruited and that there was a serious threat of deployment to war. Hardly anyone will be able to meet these criteria. These judgments in fact hinder the recognition of legitimate claims.

The German government went another way, declaring that Russian deserters should be

recognized as refugees because their desertion is considered a political act in Russia, for which they would face heavy penalties. This seems to be more practicable. This assumption may indeed lead to refugee protection according to current case law. Nevertheless, deserters will have to prove this in each individual case, so the hurdles remain high. Unfortunately, all draft evaders are excluded from the regulation. As far we are aware, this regulation is applied only in Germany.

The question remains as to how draft evaders are dealt with. Draft evaders are persons who are in principle liable to military service, but who have evaded the obligation to register, to attend a medical check or to attend other appointments at the military before being called up for military service. They were thus clever enough to evade the grasp of the authorities in a timely fashion. If they now manage to enter the European Union and apply for asylum, none of the regulations will apply to them. The Qualification Directive would provide no recourse nor would a regulation like the one of the German government, because it explicitly refers to desertion. This means, in effect, that the vast majority of those refusing to go to war in Ukraine will remain unprotected.

In May we established contact with a group of Russian draft evaders who had fled to Turkey. They turned to us because their status in Turkey was not safe. Through diplomatic channels their requests were forwarded to all the representations of the European governments to get visa. They received either no reply at all or a rejection of their plea. It was repeatedly stated that there is a valid procedure in Turkey for recognition as a refugee. The draft evaders themselves, on the other hand, feared that they would be deported because of the Turkish government's policy towards Russia.

If we look at the numbers of Russian draft evaders and deserters who are abroad, we find that really only a fraction of them have come to the European Union. We estimate that some tenths of thousands have fled to escape participation in the war. But in the European Union since the beginning of the war there are only a few thousand asylum applications from Russian citizens, among them, about 1,400 deserters and draft evaders.

I am very glad that we have a European network of groups and organizations working on these issues and supporting those affected. We are in preparation of a signature campaign that will start on September 21st. The signature campaign will demand protection and asylum for persecuted conscientious objectors, draft evaders and deserters from all sides as well as the full implementation of the right to conscientious objection in Ukraine.

Support and participation are explicitly desired. Hope to see you in the workshop.

Thanks!

The signature campaign can be found here:

<https://you.wemove.eu/campaigns/rusland-belarus-ukraine-schutz-und-asyl-fur-deserteure-und-verweigerer>



Rudi Friedrich: After graduating from high school, Rudi Friedrich did an apprenticeship as a bricklayer, then studied sociology.

He joined the German Peace Society - United War Resisters (DFG-VK) through his civilian service.

When tens of thousands fled to Germany at the beginning of the 1990s from the wars in the Balkans or Iraq, Friedrich founded Connection with others to advocate for international conscientious objectors (COs). He is internationally respected for his knowledge and experience.

He works with COs from Latin America, East Europe, Africa and Asia. Actually, among others he organized a hotline for COs from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.



Time and again, he has also introduced the topic with readings and other artistic forms:

“Run Soldier Run” – Scenic Reading with Music

Together with Talib Richard Vogl, he has been developing scenic readings on the topic of international conscientious objection for several years now. [Photos: Connection e.V.]

Mark Akkerman (Stop Wapenhandel)

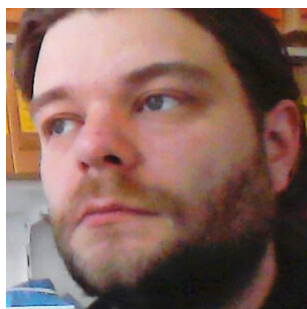



Photo: private

Stephan Brües: Introducing Mark Akkerman With a Poem of his Own

“The following poem is about the consequences of wars – people on the run. It is written in 2016 referring especially to Syrians. But it is dedicated to all refugees and their rights. So, it is not about War Profiteers about which Mark will talk, but it hints to his engagement for No borders”. (Photo and poem by Stephan Brües)



On the run

Burning bombs, breaking buildings, trickling trauma,
Standing senseless, saving survivals.
Myriad motifs to move mindlessly.

Basically the boundless belief gives birth
To a wild will to wander way off,
A wide way off. Where ever, whenever it ends.

Worrying waters, Soulless seas, burdenof boats,
Load of lorries, boundless bustle, tricky tracks
Furious fences, no stable stops.

Hopes continue hoping. All is different in Alemany, all?
All is better than in Aleppo, all?
The journey is not its own reward, it leads to a reward:
To be protected, to be alive, to be existent.

The bus finally stops at a destination
To a Welcome or to a Back off
Welcome!

(March 2016)

Presentation of Mark Akkerman: How the arms industry profits from the Ukraine War

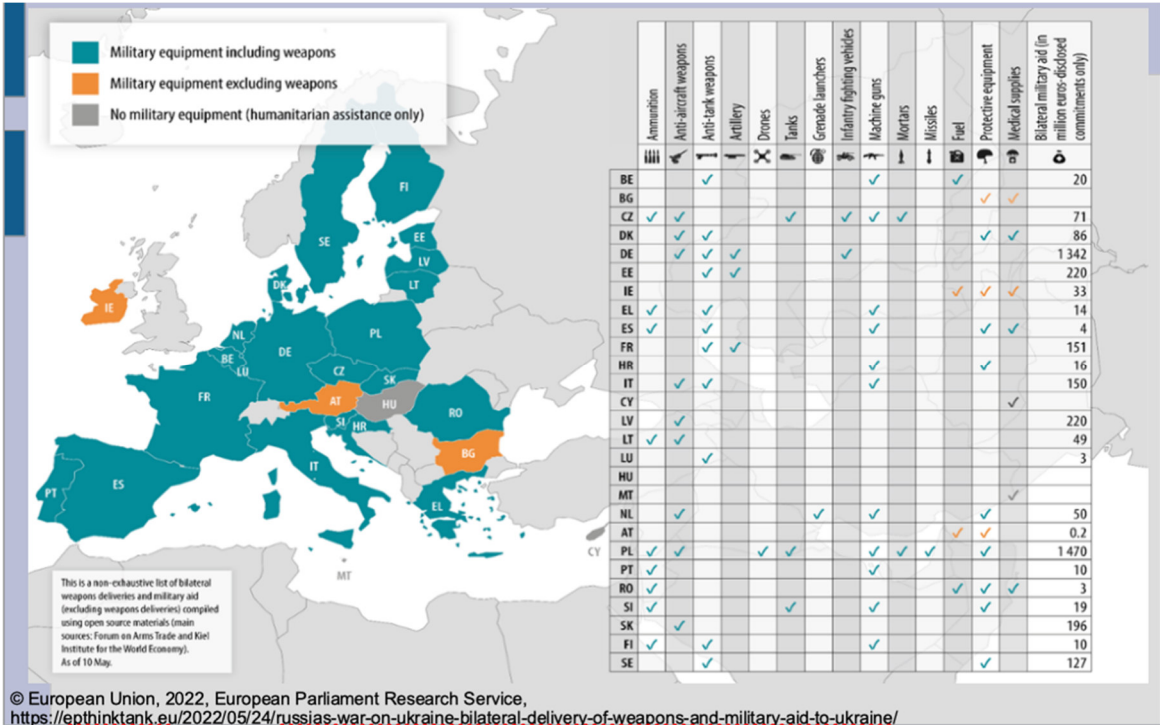
(0) The Russian invasion in Ukraine has caused immense misery, death, destruction, and suffering. There are however places where there has been a non-stop party going on since 24 February. For example, the board rooms of arms companies, where increasing profits are being counted. Stock prices have soared. This war comes at exactly the right time for the arms industry, and that is about more than the announced increases in military spending. Eight ways the European military industry profits from this war. What I'm going to tell now is a very short summary of an upcoming report about these issues, which we will publish as Stop Wapenhandel and Transnational Institute this or next month.

(1) Arms supplies to Ukraine.

The picture from the European Parliament shows an overview as of end of May 2022.

Some 30 countries, mostly NATO and EU members, have supplied enormous amounts of arms to Ukraine in military aid since the start of the invasion. At the start of the war these were mostly surplus arms from their own armed forces' stockpiles. However, there is a

limit to these resources and several countries have now turned to the military industry to deliver arms directly to Ukraine. Several governments support the national arms industry in exporting to Ukraine, for example with funding – like Belgium and the UK – or by setting up specific structures to facilitate exports, like The Netherlands.



Ukraine has also started to conclude new contracts for arms purchases and maintenance, in particular benefiting arms companies in Central European countries.

A lot can be said about donating arms to Ukraine, and it has led to long discussions within anti-arms trade circles, which go beyond this presentation. One point to keep in mind though is the longevity of arms. Arms supplied to warring parties in one conflict almost always end up going to other conflicts or with criminal networks. Even NATO and EU officials have voiced concerns about arms donations to Ukraine in this context, also pointing to the country's bad track record in international arms deals. It ignores embargoes and for example has no problems to cooperate with the dictatorship in Myanmar in arms production.

(2) Replenishing and replacing arms.

The European Commission called 'the short-term need to replenish and expand defence stocks including to compensate for the military assistance to Ukraine ' one of the most urgent steps to be taken at this time. Countries' demands on the international arms market are rising in this context. For now, US arms companies seem to be the big winners. Also: countries that still have old Russian or Soviet weapons want to get rid of them, because they no longer want necessary maintenance to be done by Russian weapons companies. Those arms are then sold to countries that still maintain good ties with Russia. This further fuels the already not so transparent second-hand arms market, resulting in all kinds of shady transactions and dubious deliveries. And the weapons that are discarded must also be replaced. For this, too, states mainly turn to American and European arms companies.

(3) Increasing military spending.

One of the major benefits of the war for the industry are the announced increases in military spending, which will most likely raise the level of global military spending – which was at over \$2 trillion dollars last year – with hundreds of billions a year. According to the

European Commission EU member states have already announced over €200 billion of extra military spending, mostly to buy and upgrade arms. Many countries published long shopping lists, with lots of heavy arms' systems, for the coming years.

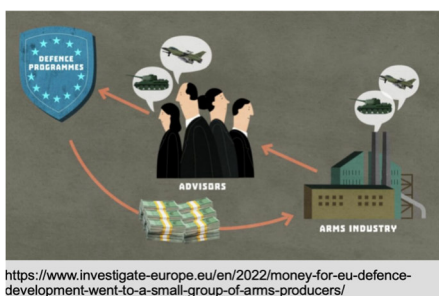
It is almost taken as a given that military budgets need to increase in EU and NATO countries, with the infamous '2% of GDP' NATO leaders agreed upon in 2014 as a ridiculous new spending target. It is good to realise however that these assumptions of need for more spending is built on nothing. The numbers speak volumes. Last year, NATO countries combined spent over 18 times as much on their armed forces as Russia. Much of this comes from the United States, but the EU alone (without the UK) also spends almost four times as much as Russia. Now, spending doesn't say everything about military strength, but there can be no doubts that NATO and EU both military outpower Russia by far. That both sides have nuclear weapons is another problem in this context of course.

(4) EU funding.

The EU has taken large steps in militarisation and support the arms industry in recent years. The establishment of the European Defence Fund, an €8 billion instrument to fund military research and the development of new arms and technologies between 2021 and 2027, is the most visible part of this. Another new instrument, the European Peace Facility, has a nice name but is mainly used to fund arms donations to non-EU-countries and has now already given a few billion euros to EU member states for arms supplies to Ukraine. The European Commission has announced it will come with a proposal to increase these instruments later this year.

The Ukraine War has also triggered the establishment of funding for joint arms procurement by three or more member states. For the next two years the EU has made €500 million available for this, with the aim of creating a new permanent funding mechanism for this after this period. Both the EU and member states' governments have clearly stated that this funding should benefit the European arms industry and that it is also driven by economic interests. The same is true for a new billions of euros packet launched by the European Investment Bank to fund the arms industry, with the exclusion of the production of lethal arms.

(5) Lobby and greenwashing.



As you can see, in many cases the Ukraine War has benefited the arms industry in the context of already ongoing debates and processes. The military industry, which traditionally isn't that popular with a wider public, suddenly has the opportunity to position itself as the 'good guys', the only ones able to supply the tools to fight 'evil'. Authorities increasingly see arms companies as partners, also involving them in policy-making. This is an ongoing process. For example, fifty Dutch arms companies have already been allowed to provide input for the De-

fence Vision 2035 that was presented last autumn, and major European arms companies were given a permanent dialogue group with the European Commission. Authorities embrace representatives of the arms industry as experts, but they themselves take great care to put their own economic interests forward.

(6) Taxonomy and investments.

One of the discussions that was already going on and where the arms industry now tries to capitalize on its current 'popularity' is the issue of sustainable investments. To give some

guidelines about this to investors – banks, pension funds, insurance companies and others – is in the process of compiling a 'taxonomy'. Next to environmental and climate change considerations there is also a proposal for a 'social' taxonomy in the works. A first draft clearly expressed that the military industry cannot be considered a sustainable investment whatsoever. The industry self is lobbying hard against this, arguing that 'security' is a prerequisite for sustainability and that as such arms production is sustainable per se. A laughable reasoning? Yes, but possibly successful: the final draft advisory report on social taxonomy avoids any general statements about arms, only mentioning the production of prohibited weapons as problematic. And the European Commission doesn't stop calling for giving arms companies good access to private finance. Meanwhile, some banks have revised their exclusion policies and have started to (re)include arms companies in their portfolios.

(7) Easing arms export restrictions.



Copyright: NATO; https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_197251.htm

Sometimes in a very direct way: on the picture you see the announcement of a tripartite agreement between Finland, Sweden, and Turkey. The first two were all too willing to give up their moratoria on arms exports to Turkey, to get its approval to join NATO. Turkey's invasion in North Syria, repression against Kurds and political opposition, human rights violations and tense relations with neighbours are suddenly all forgotten and will from now on again be fuelled by Swedish and Fin-nish arms.

But there are also changes on EU level prepared. The arms industry has long been complaining about the lack of a so-called 'level playing field'. General EU arms export criteria apply for all member states, but their interpretation is left to individual governments and as such varies wildly in strictness. Now the European Commission proposes to get rid of export licenses for the transfer of arms components within the EU in the context of joint arms production under the European Defence Fund. For an export of a complete weapons system to a non-EU-country only the country where the system is assembled has then to give a permit, according to the Commission. This will undoubtedly lead to a 'race to the bottom', where companies will aim to have their systems assembled in countries with the least strict interpretation of EU arms export criteria, like France or Bulgaria. An extra bonus for the industry: the Commission has proposed VAT exemptions for the transfer of arms components within the EU for EDF projects.

(8) Sanctions and raw materials.

One of the few setbacks for the arms industry as a consequence of the war in Ukraine is that it is bothered by sanctions against Russia and Belarus and faces difficulties in access to raw materials, for some of which it highly depends on Russia. Here again the European Commission comes to the rescue: it announced a Critical Raw Materials initiative, to guarantee the arms industry's access to resources like titanium. Part of the initiative would be more self-sufficiency in the EU, including (re)starting mining with all its destructive consequences for local environments and communities.

(9) There is little parliamentary and public debate about all these support measures for the arms industry, including about the huge increases in military spending. While surveys show that public support for these increases is less than what it seems like, in parliaments new budgets are adopted with huge majorities. Saying 'Russia' and 'years of underspending' is seen as enough argumentation. From peace movements there is some opposition, like '100

billion better ideas' campaign in Germany, but we are certainly on the defensive here. There will no doubt be hard times ahead for us arguing for peace, dialogue, diplomacy, and international and social justice instead of militarisation and hostile thinking.

A longer report will be published soon by Stop Wapenhandel and TNI.

Mark Akkerman (*1979, they/ them) is a researcher at Stop Wapenhandel (Dutch campaign against arms trade) [<https://stopwapenhandel.org/>] and for the Transnational Institute (TNI) [<https://www.tni.org/>].

They hold a MSc in Public Administration and have long been involved in the peace, no border and anarchist movements, including the Abolish Frontex network [<https://www.abolishfrontex.org/>]. Their research focuses on the militarisation of borders and the role of the arms industry, European and Dutch arms export policies, EU (financial) support to the military and security industry and the influence of this industry on policy-making.

Recent publications include:

(2022) Fanning the Flames: How the European Union is fuelling a new arms race (March 2022) - with TNI and ENAAT [<https://stopwapenhandel.org/app/uploads/2022/03/fanning-the-flames-report-tni-web-new.pdf>]

(2021) Frontex and the military and security industry (November 2021) - factsheet for the Abolish Frontex Research Group [<https://abolishfrontex.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Frontex-and-the-military-and-security-industry.pdf>]

(2021) Global Climate Wall: How the world's wealthiest nations prioritise borders over climate action (October 2021) - with TNI [<https://stopwapenhandel.org/app/uploads/2021/10/global-climate-wall-report-tni-web-resolution.pdf>]

(2021) A Union of Arms Exports: Why European arms keep fuelling war and repression around the world (October 2021) - [<https://stopwapenhandel.org/app/uploads/2021/10/a-union-of-arms-export-WEB.pdf>]

(2021) Financing Border Wars: The border industry, its financiers and human rights (April 2021) - with TNI [<https://stopwapenhandel.org/app/uploads/2021/10/financingborderwars-report-tni-2.pdf>]



Christine Schweitzer, Federation of Social Defence, Germany



Photo: C. Werner

Stephan Brües: Introducing Christine Schweitzer With a Poem of His Own

With this poem I want to introduce Christine, who is Executive Officer of BSV. She is the expert on alternatives to war. So, I compare the militaristic way of thinking to an alternative one that Christine will present later.

Writing like Erich Fried II

*Those who do not want to exclude wars
have to prepare for wars, Stockpile weapons, drill people,
Muzzle the media, invent reasons for war.*

*Those who want to have a strong Army
Have to take on 100 billion Euro in debt, no, sorry: in special assets.
Those who want to have a strong Army
Must change the constitution to be allowed to incur debts.
Must renew weapons, must continue nuclear sharing, must develop interconnected weapon
systems.
Spread the word through all channels that there is no alternative.
Thus deter the enemies.
And – possibly – wage wars.*

*If you want peace,
You have to prepare for peace.
Give billions for conflict prevention,
Billions for a social, fair, ecological world economy.
Billions for a reformed UN, for the OSCE
Billions for peacebuilding.*

*Those who want peace,
Must open dialogues, show nonviolent alternatives
And spread them through all channels.
And then wage peace.*

(written April 2022)

Presentation by Christine Schweitzer



Nonviolent Alternatives to War
Dr. Christine Schweitzer
(schweitzer@soziale-verteidigung.de)



100 years of War Resisters' International (WRI)

A century of more wars than could easily be counted. One statistic speaks of 242 wars since 1945.

Here in Europe history is of course dominated by the two World Wars and the few other wars since 1945 (Northern Ireland, former Yugoslavia, Georgia...). The war in Ukraine is not so singular as media and politicians want to make us think. Though it is probably one of few with a very high potential of escalation to a third world war, or „at least“ leading to a new era of Cold War.

The Russian aggression must be condemned and the war stopped. But we should not forget the Western wars of aggression on all continents (decolonizing wars, „humanitarian interventions“, „war on terror“. And all the other wars.



NV alternatives: The responses of pacifists

- Protest the wars
- To refuse to become a soldier
- To refuse to support the war at all, also not as a civilian
(might depend on consideration if the war in question is a „just“ one)
- Support deserters and COs
- Support anti-war activists (money, trainings,...)
- Humanitarian: aid, refugees
- Consider (and sometimes carry through) direct nonviolent interventions (peace marches, caravans)
- Set up longer-term „peace armies“ — } UCP
- Promote civilian-based (or social) defence



Social defence

In the past, WRI has been interested in social or civilian-based defence. For example, there was a conference together with IFOR in 1991 in Bradford, with Gene Sharp, Brian Martin and many other prominent people.

Since then, SD has not played a major role as an alternative to military defence.

This has changed now. At least in Germany

we are discussing it in two contexts: : Kusurija – Vlastní dílo, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=31492433>

- As a „could have been“-option for Ukraine
- As an alternative for us in NATO countries, because a nuclear war would destroy all that people mean to defend.



We need

- An antimilitarist and nonviolent approach that criticizes the Russian attack **as well as** its Western response.
- Realistic proposals how the war could be ended quickly and the lives of people – civilians AND soldiers spared.
- Countering the new wave of militarism by pointing out what its consequences might be; and building up nonviolent alternatives like social defence and Unarmed Civilian Protection.

Left: Nonviolent Peaceforce; right: © Engramma.it, n. 64, agosto 2008, CC BY 3.0 DE



*Christine Schweitzer Ph.D., *1959 in Hamburg / Germany, has spent most of her professional life working in nonviolence and peace movements. Currently, she is a researcher at the “Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation” (IFGK, www.ifgk.de) which she co-founded, Executive Secretary of the German organisation “Federation for Social Defence” (www.soziale-verteidigung.de), and co-editor of the bi-monthly magazine “Peace Forum” (www.friedenskooperative.de).*

Christine holds a Masters in Social Anthropology from the University of Cologne and a Ph.D from the University of Coventry received for her thesis on Strategies of Intervention in Protracted Violent Conflicts by Civil Society Actors. The Example of Interventions in the Violent Conflicts in the Area of Former Yugoslavia, 1990 – 2002. She has published on conflict transformation, nonviolence, Unarmed Civilian Protection (peacekeeping), social defence, the Balkans, Syria and Turkey. She has co-founded and co-managed the international volunteer project “Balkan Peace Team” in the 1990s and worked as a Research and Program Director for “Nonviolent Peaceforce” most of the 2000s. Since 2017, she accompanies the Good Practice Project of Nonviolent Peaceforce by documenting the workshops that are being held on a regional basis (see <https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/developing-and-expanding-the-field>)

She lives in Hamburg, Germany.

Nina Koevoets; Peace Power.org, Netherlands



Photo: private

At the 'Not Our War'-event on Saturday she presented for an audience of around ten people the game ("Changing the Game"). Here a note of the participant observer, Stephan Brües, on the presentation of Nina:

The Culture of Peace game is about 'challenges' within organisations or groups that can be dealt with in different ways (more confrontational or more constructive).

By means of playing cards (*see photo, below left*) discussions between the participants are stimulated.

While constructive approaches usually score more points, from a strategic point of view some more confrontational times may also be appropriate.

Thus, there are certain competitive elements, but they are not in the foreground.

The photo is from this website.

Information at www.peace-power.org. It should be ready by November. It can then be downloaded free of charge and the playing cards printed out.



Nina Koevoets is a trainer in "peacebuilding from below", which includes skills in analysing, understanding, and responding to conflict, and organising and campaigning/ advocating non-violently for your cause.

She is the co-author of the Study Guide "Engaging Nonviolence. Activating Nonviolent Change in Our Lives and Our World", together with Veronica Pelicarić, to be published by Pace e Bene.

And since 2015 she has been organising her own training program having started totally from scratch, applying for, and receiving EU funding, finding people to work with and participants. She designed the content of the program and delivered it with another colleague. The program includes nonviolent actions and campaigns, nonviolent communication, conflict resolution. Since then, she organised several trainings.

Educational background: Two master's degrees: Global Studies (University of Gothenburg, 2011-13) and Conflict Resolution and Governance (University of Amsterdam, 2006-7).

Bachelor's in psychology and cultural Anthropology (University of Leiden, 2003-2006)

She has experience in facilitating workshops, and project management, in six different countries, including Palestine/Israel. She was born and raised in The Netherlands and live in Greece.

Culture Programme



Frank Van Schaik (facilitator of the first program part)

Frank van Schaik (* 1970) has been involved in presenting, interviewing, moderating, thinking, writing - and all that in Dutch, English, Swedish, German, Spanish, French or fake Russian (in decreasing degrees of correctness).

In doing so, he is especially very familiar with the fields of environment and development, but does not shy away from any other subject, except perhaps "Public Art Property in Uruguay" (but that is open to discussion).

He also sings and rewrites existing songs for specific occasions, spins very invigorating music as a Hola DJ (an irresistible mix of familiar disco, soul classics, golden oldies, salsa, klezmer, reggae, 'smartlappen' and other tipsy folk music), invents titles and lyrics, and sometimes performs hard and skillfully as a Stand-up Comedian.

Besides he is an ordinary school teacher – what not so ever conflicts with the other.

Besides he is an ordinary school teacher – what not so ever conflicts with the other.

<http://www.frankvanschaik.nl>

With all his entertaining skills he led us through the first session of the "Not Our War" program with serious political inputs of War Resisters, with singing rebels and a member of the organizing team who is also poet sometimes.

2. Your Local Pirates (music)



Here are Joke Kaviaar and Peter Storm.

Together, we are Your Local Pirates: a couple of singing rebels.

We sing and make music, acoustic songs with guitar and voice.

You can find us at demonstrations, alternative festivals and wherever we get ourselves invited to make the atmosphere even more rebellious than the mood already is.



Photo: Stephan Brües

Many of our songs are written by either one or both of us, but we also play songs we like that other artists have created. Be prepared for our attack!

The team of "Not Our War" was prepared for the attack of these Your Local Pirates.

Look at the song from a video done by Jan Ruysenaars that evening:



Stephan Brües (poems)



Born in 1965, Stephan Brües, is mainly a peace activist from Germany, engaged as co-chair of the Federation for Social Defence (BSV, www.soziale-verteidigung.de) and representative to the War Resisters International network.

He is a member of the organizing team of "Not Our War".

Professionally Stephan is freelance scientific editor and lives in Wiesloch near Heidelberg (where someone left her*his heart...).

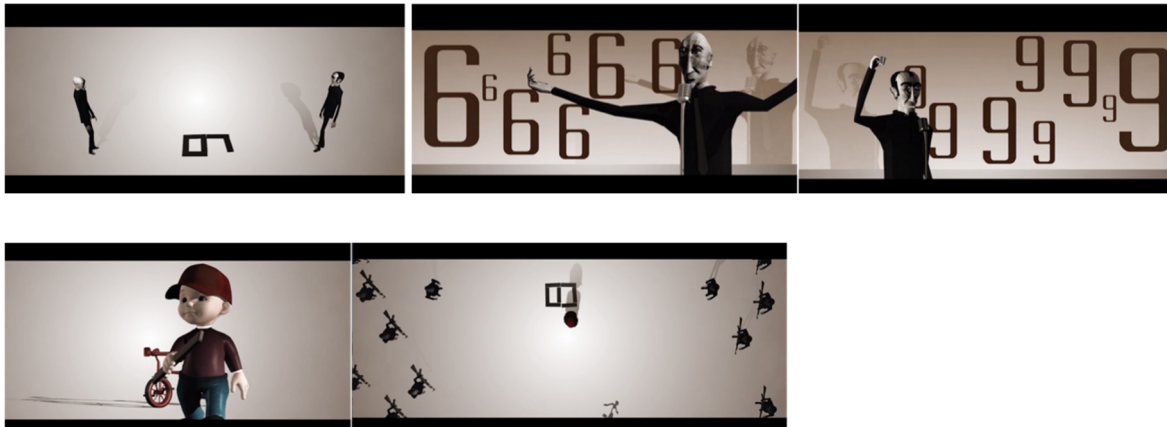
When he was in high school, he began to write political and other poems. And he continued this until now, as with artistic expression you get people more emotionally, even if the poem is about a political topic.

On the photo (done by Heidi Flassak) he reads during the Easter Marsh manifestation in Heidelberg 2022 two of the three poems that he also read in Utrecht (see above).

Some short films in the later evening

While especially the German guests from Connection and the under-35 of DFG-VK talked about how to support the COs and deserters and raise public awareness through a spectacular action, Stephan Brües showed two short films:

a) An anti-war film from Iraq: Angle by Khaled Al-Bayati (shown at the Short Film Festival in Kerbala, Irak, April 2017, thanks to Khaled for permission)



The film could be used for peace education. There are some ideas for school lessons on conflict resolution by Stephan Brües.

b)The film on the Women in White of Liberia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mvbv7o6ClPQ>

edited by BSV, Minden; drawn by Pudels Kern, Berlin
financed by Brot für die Welt, Berlin



Aftermath



photo can be seen in that link)

While people looked short films, networked or planned activities, Reinoud Doeschot, member of the organizing team, went to the public radio NPO 1 in Hilversum and talked about WRI, Ukraine, Be-larus and pacifism.

See <https://www.nporadio1.nl/fragmenten/nos-met-het-oog-op-morgen/b8a66668-b24e-4b5d-9bad-a08da08ba4c2/2022-09-10-hoe-kijkt-een-pacifist-naar-de-huidige-oorlog-in-oekraïne> (in Dutch) (the

Blogs and actions in Germany

The Under-35-group of DFG-VK has written a retrospective of the event in a blog, see here:

<https://amab.blackblogs.org/2022/09/18/zukunft-ohne-krieg-ein-bericht-zur-veranstaltung-der-war-resisters-international/> See a

photo (from the blog) with a view from the back of the Grote Zaal of De Kargadoor during the speech of Olga Karatch.



Berlin: Solidarity adbusters for COs in front of Belarusian embassy

Excitement at the Belarusian Embassy: Even in Berlin, the Belarusian head of state Lukashenko is no longer safe from criticism. Around the place where the dictator's employees work, the action group LIDUS ("Lukashenko is stupid and stinks") hijacked all the advertising showcases of the WallDecaux company without permission. (...) "War resisters from Belarus urgently need our support," explains the action group, "that's why we decided to have a solidarity action in front of the embassy."



The group distributed a total of twelve posters without permission in advertising display cases at Treptower Park between the embassy, the [Russian War] memorial and the train station. "We hope that embassy staff and customers will walk past and see the posters," said the action group.

To invade Ukraine, the Russian military is also using Belarus. So far, Belarus has not officially attacked Ukraine. But the government of dictator Lukashenko is trying to draft 20,000 conscripts every year. For the opposition organisation "Nash Dom" (Our House), it is clear that Lukashenko's entry into the war is only a matter of time. That is why "Nash Dom" is calling on people in Belarus to refuse military service. In Belarus, the right to refuse military service is written into the constitution, but those who invoke it must expect imprisonment and torture. That is why "Nash Dom" also supports fugitive conscripts in the EU. "So that the EU doesn't just talk a lot about human rights, but also does something about it, we demand asylum for draft evaders from Belarus," explains the action group (...).

More information on Nash Dom and "No Second Front": <https://news.house/>

Source: <https://de.indymedia.org/node/226268> (shortened)