

For A Military-Free Peace Policy

Memorandum on the occasion of „The 350th Anniversary
of the Peace Treaty of Westphalia“

I. 1648 – 1998. War and destructive power structures have not been overcome

350 years ago, the peace treaty of Osnabrück and Münster brought the Thirty Years War to a close around the negotiating table, spurred on by the weariness which was the result of decades of horrific war atrocities. However, Europe did not in any way become more peaceable. The peace treaty did, on the one hand, have positive aspects which showed the way forward, such as for example the recognition of three equal religious denominations. On the other hand, it merely marked a stage in the war-ridden process of the formation of nation-states and the militarism which is closely associated with it. In the 20th century, European wars escalated into world wars. In the 2nd World War, the link between nationalism and racism culminated in total war and mass murder on a previously unknown scale.

Peace was not won with the victory over Hitler's Germany. The nuclear arms race in the Cold War drove humanity to near self-destruction. We are still threatened by old and new nuclear powers and the weapons they possess. Innumerable people die in wars, even now, after the end of the Cold War. The victims are mainly civilians, the elderly and the sick, women and children. Many pay the price of nationalistic and military megalomania with expulsion and flight, with being

reduced to poverty, even with death by starvation. When those from the "peaceful" regions of our continent seek refuge from persecution, misery and war, they often find in its place inner-societal violence, xenophobia and racism, ostracism and deportation.

There are many motives and driving forces behind war. To prevent future wars, it is first necessary to recognise the reasons for war and for the public to deal with these issues. However, the rich industrialised states and the democratic constitutional states, which are peaceful in appearance only, carry the main responsibility for the present wars and the misery which accompanies them in other parts of the world. Their drive for power and profit reproduces and continuously exacerbates the unjust structures in the world economy, the rules of which are determined by unrestrained capitalism. The deepening of the gap between rich and poor countries leads to an increased readiness to use violence in a world driven by greed and profit lust. Science and industry's obsession with technocratic achievement leads to the sale of objects needed for killing when employing military force. The use of these objects means not only death for the affected persons, but also fundamental damage of the environment.

After the end of the block confrontation, an historic opportunity opened up to turn away from military to civilian forms of managing conflicts. On the one hand, this opportunity is not being used sufficiently, and is, on the other hand, being undermined by the powers of the old military way of thinking. Instead of joining together in Eastern Europe to fight against poverty and unemployment, improve the environment and give hope to the people there by drastically reducing military potential, NATO was successful in fulfilling its interest to extend eastwards. This weakens the forces of peace and democracy, not just in Russia.

Instead of establishing a system of civil conflict management and strengthening the UN and the OSCE, the industrial nations of the North have managed to legitimise their rearmament programmes. Claiming apparent threats to security in all variations is just as suited for this purpose as is the creation of exchangeable enemy images, of which Islam is the best present example. Even humanitarian purposes are used as an excuse to legitimise military intervention, thus abusing the sense of justice and the sympathy of many people.

While "Fortress Europe" is isolating herself militarily, swift intervention troops and crisis reaction forces are to "defend" the global interests of the industrial powers and, for example, "protect" the sources of natural resources or secure these with force. The attempts to make the Western European Union (WEU) into the core of a militarily-oriented foreign policy of the European Union (EU) are a step in the wrong direction. "Fortress Europe" would be the fatal conclusion to the era of building nation-states, which commenced with the Peace Treaty of Westphalia. It is now Europe's responsibility to go new ways in peace policy. The time has come to outlaw war for ever.



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II. Pacifism – from the idea to reality

The pacifist aim of a world free from war lies in the interests of the earth's people. The way to achieve this aim is the consistent development of civilian forms of managing conflicts in both theory and practice. At the same time, we are agitating for a continual process of disarmament until the military is done away with. In the past, prominent personalities from politics, culture and science have joined with millions of others from political and social movements in opposing the fall of society into the barbarity of militarism. Bertha von Suttner, Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Bertrand Russell, Romain Rolland, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Alva Myrdal, Petra Kelly and Robert Jungk belong to these. We feel ourselves attached to this tradition, which reaches back to Immanuel Kant's "Treatise on Eternal Peace."

We are convinced,

- that in an age in which the future of humankind is dependent as never before on solidarity based on equality, militarily armed nation-states and military alliances are an anachronism;
- that governments have no right to cause men, women and children to kill and to train them for this purpose. It is of no consequence whether the army is conscript-based or professional;
- that military service is inhuman and illegitimate because it is an offence against human self-determination, just as slavery is;
- that the economic, social and ecological problems which threaten the future of humankind cannot be solved by military means. These intensify them;
- that we at all levels have to learn and practise at being a culture free from

violence, because only this represents the basis for a humane world;

- that the methods applied to carry out conflicts must correspond to the desired objectives: Peace is both method and objective;

The 20th century does not only represent a terrible episode of wars. It has also brought important decisions and the first steps towards pacifist politics. Among these can be counted agreements whose purpose it is to limit war atrocities and which for the first time question the legality of wars. In this context, it is worth mentioning the founding of the League of Nations and that of the United Nations, the outlawing of wars of aggression, the ban on the use of particularly inhuman weapons or the establishment of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In 1996, the International Court of Justice declared the threat and use of nuclear weapons to be contrary to international law. In 1997, the anti-land mine campaign was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Following this, 100 states committed themselves at the Ottawa Conference to abolishing anti-personnel mines.

The protest and resistance offered by several social groups opposed to war and the military throughout this century was not uninvolved in contributing to this development. The anti-war movement in the 1920s, the utilisation of the right to object to all kinds of military service, the ecumenical movement of the churches against war, the movement against nuclear weapons in the 1950s and 1960s and the peace movement in the 1980s are worthy of note, as are the appearance of many forms of protest, civil disobedience and non-violent resistance right up to the present day. To these can be added the activities of non-parlia-



Pablo Picasso

mentary groups, some of which are particularly strong in their advocating of non-violent ways of managing conflicts, and the establishment of the civilian peace service.

The catastrophic wars of this century can be juxtaposed with examples of a new kind of peace politics:

- Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King proved the power of non-violence with convincing strategies and actions;
- Violence-free civil rights and human rights movements made a considerable contribution to the fact that the upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe were on the whole as bloodless as they were;

- The overcoming of the policy of apartheid in South Africa is a positive example for the interplay of an external economic boycott and internal mass civilian action for justice, combined with the willingness for reconciliation, which is especially embodied in the person of Nelson Mandela.

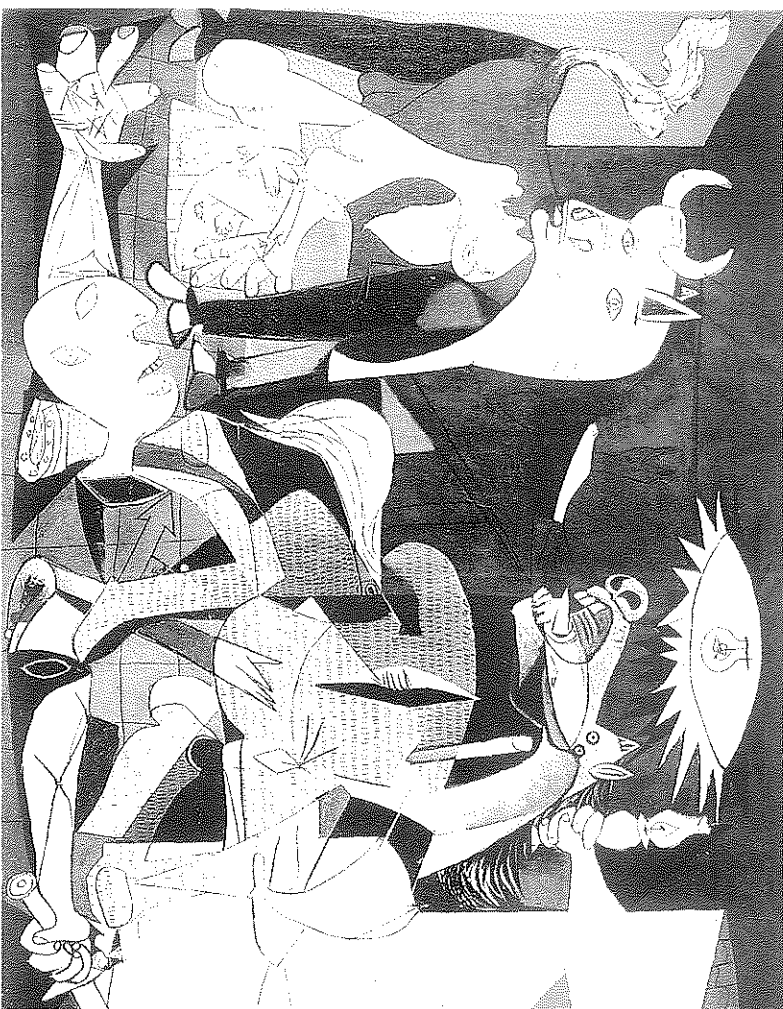
The relapse into military violence – especially after the overcoming of a bipolar world – does not disprove pacifist politics, but proves and strengthens its urgency. Conflicts such as those in the Balkans must be checked before being allowed to escalate into wars. If the Great Powers are incapable of doing this and intervene militarily "to prevent genocide", they are documenting the failure of their

policy. It is not pacifism, but the non-adherence of its demands which favours wars and warlike massacres.

Pacifism works towards people not becoming accustomed to violence. It opposes violence, stops it in its path and liberates towards new perspectives of action. It permanently releases immense resources and makes as such an important contribution to the overcoming of

poverty, the dismantling of global and inner-societal inequality and the building of a sustainable world economic order based on solidarity.

Thus pacifism is also necessary for the regeneration and protection of the environment. Peace with nature and peace among peoples necessitate and encourage one another.



III. Perspectives of Pacifist Action

The aim of pacifism is not to outlaw war and uncover its causes alone. Pacifism also wants to establish a culture of peace by educating towards peace. This implies that all people unconditionally recognise each other's right to exist and to campaign for equal opportunities between North and South, present and future generations, young and old, men and women. This implies that the role of women, mothers and women politicians in establishing a culture of peace be recognised and fostered more than to date. Cooperative togetherness in kindergartens, schools, at work, in the neighbourhood and democratic self administration at all levels can contribute to the strengthening of peace culture.

An important aspect of this culture of peace is civilian conflict management, which first and foremost appeals to the belligerents' own sense of responsibility. However, civilian conflict management also implies intervention with civilian means, both during and after an escalation of violence. This comprises preventative measures to manage conflicts, de-escalating steps such as mediation services, arms embargoes, economic sanctions directed at specific objectives, public intervention by the media, support for civilian opposition groups, deserters and refugees, incentives for peaceful solutions and work towards reconciliation, economic and reconstruction aid, medical and social provision for war victims etc.

The form of politics which predominates at present refuses to allow the necessary changes in thoughts and actions to take hold, mainly due to its inability or unwillingness to imagine a world free from weapons. We will not allow ourselves to err from our path because of this. Costa Rica shows that a state can exist without

an army and can work positively towards peace.

We call upon the European and international peace movement to network more intensely than before, to organise joint campaigns (for example against land mines and light weapons for the peace tax fund, for a Europe without armies ...) and to develop a general concept of civilian means of managing conflicts in theory and practice as a perspective for the 21st century.

We call upon people to demonstrate and join in acts of civil disobedience at places where weapons are made, where wars take place, where military equipment is put on display and dealt in at international trade fairs.

We call upon young people to refuse to do military service and to reject serving in a professional army.

We call upon all people to refuse to cooperate in military projects, be they of an economic, scientific or political nature, and to demand in their place the conversion from military to civilian products and the introduction of peace studies in schools and the establishment of curricula in peace education and peace research at universities.

We challenge the rights of governments to declare military means legitimate in the securing of peace.

We turn to the parliaments of all European states, to the European Parliament, to the OSCE and to the United Nations and demand that preparations be made for a military-free peace policy. We support the call of the Nobel Peace Prize laureates to declare the first

decade of the 21st century the decade free from violence and propose as the first steps:

- the abandonment of the interventionist aims of new NATO, the Western European Union and the EU;
- the initiation of the dissolution of military alliances;
- the continuation of the dismantling of nuclear weapons in Europe and in the world until they are completely eliminated - based on the Report of the International Court of Justice from 08.07.1996;
- the outlawing of the arms trade and the creation of conversion agencies for the systematic transformation of military establishments and armaments;
- the supporting of initiatives to create alliance-free and demilitarised zones;
- as a first step towards the abolition of armies the abolition of conscription and the protection of those who refuse to do military service, total objectors and deserters;
- the aiding of the global recognition of conscientious objection as a human right;
- the creation of legal provisions to allow citizens to decide freely to pay that part of their taxes which would normally be spent on the military into a fund to finance a military-free peace policy;
- the continual reduction of the military expenditure of European states until armies have been abolished so that the UN's and the OSCE's instruments of peace politics can be financed and extended;
- the support of cross-border joint ecological, social and cultural projects with the aim of letting people experience the culture of peace and living together in harmony;
- the strengthening of the UN's and OSCE's political independence through democratic reforms and their protection from instrumentalisation;
- the creation of a civilian Peace Council comprising non-state peace and human rights organisations for the UN and the OSCE respectively to coordinate all activities of civilian conflict management internationally and in Europe;
- conceptual and financial support for civilian conflict management and for the establishment of European and international civilian peace services;
- On account of its history of wars, Europe must make the first step on the road to military-free peace politics.

Formulated and unanimously passed on January 9, 1998 in Osnabrück by the German Preparation Committee 'Perspectives of Pacifist Action' of the European Peace Congress 1998.

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Why was this document written; how did it come about and

how can it be put to use

This memorandum was drafted in connection with the preparations for the European Peace Congress, which will take place in Osnabrück at the end of May 1998 on the occasion of the "350th Anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia". It ought to represent a declaration of principles for a **military-free peace policy** with which as many people as possible can identify.

The memorandum should help bring together the European and international peace movements, strengthen their ability to work towards pacifist perspectives beyond the congress date and create a substantial basis for joint cross-border action and campaigns.

The memorandum ought to provide new impulses for peace groups in individual states to formulate their own declarations which are tailored to respective specific situations.

The document reflects a 14 months long discussion process. Several drafts were intensively discussed, dismissed and reworked. Many people and peace organisations took an active part in the discussions after the publication of a draft in English and German by means of detailed statements and suggestions for

improvement. At a European preparatory meeting, which took place in Brussels in mid-December 1997 and to which over 40 representatives of the European peace movements came, further suggestions for improvement were made, especially regarding the connection between pacifism and the equal opportunities for women.

The authors of this document have made every effort to incorporate the suggestions made as far as possible. In this respect, the final draft of the document has a wide base. It is soon to be translated into and circulated in as many European languages as possible. The authors hope that the participants of the Osnabrück Congress can identify with this preparation and find an interest in discussing in many congress working groups which activities listed in the document and beyond are necessary for working towards a **military-free peace policy**.

After the congress, the memorandum will be made available for people and organisations to sign. However, the authors already request feedback and suggestions as to how the document can be circulated and effectively be put to political use.

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