The Broken Rifle
Newsletter of War Resisters' International

No. 65, February 2005

War Resisters’ International launches new Nonviolence Programme

With the appointment of Javier Garate as new programme staff for War Resisters’ International’s Nonviolence Programme, WRI launches its “new” programme formally. Of course, although the programme is new, nonviolence is not new to WRI. In 1928, War Resisters’ International published a collection of essays on nonviolence in German language, titled Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit (Violence and non-violence). In the 1960s, War Resisters’ International played an important role in spreading the theory and practice of nonviolence training, for example by organising a study conference on nonviolence training in Perugia in Italy in 1965 (see picture).

The new Nonviolence Programme
At the War Resisters’ International Council meeting in Ohrid, Macedonia, in June 2004, it was decided to merge the WRI programmes “Nonviolence and Social Empowerment” and “Globalisation and Militarism” into a new programme called “Nonviolence Programme”. The Nonviolence and Social Empowerment Programme goes back to the mid-1990s, and had focused on the Nonviolence and Social Empowerment Study Conference, which took place in Puri, India, in February 2001. The last main project in this programme was the Women’s Trainers’ Consultation, which took place in October 2004 in Thailand (see p. 2). The Globalisation and Militarism programme goes back to the WRI Triennial Conference in Dublin. Its focus was the European Social Forum, which took place in London from 14-17 October 2004. Both programmes were in the past “network programmes”, run entirely by working groups and volunteers, with no or little involvement of central office staff. Merging these two programme areas into a staffed position makes a number of new projects possible. The overarching aim of the Nonviolence Programme is to strengthen and deepen our understanding of nonviolence and social empowerment, and to develop and provide tools and support to groups using nonviolence. It builds on the former Nonviolence and Social Empowerment programme: “Social Empowerment is a process in which people find back to their own power, the power to shape their own lives and to influence the course of events around them. They start to practice this power against oppression and exclusion, for participation, peace and human rights.”

The key aspects of the New Nonviolence Programme remain valid for the Nonviolence Programme:

- the dimension of social empowerment should be a key element in considering the impact of any social movement activity;
- the framework of social empowerment offers a perspective for cooperation between hitherto competing or even conflicting approaches; that strategies of empowerment are intrinsic to the effectiveness of nonviolent movements; that the methodology of nonviolence offers specific insights into social empowerment.

This is also reflected in WRI’s approach of antimilitarism. Nonviolent action, especially nonviolent confrontation, offers a rich tradition of strategies of empowerment that have been successful in many different situations. The new programme is to strengthen our ability to promote nonviolence. This will be dealt with in our programme, and the power of nonviolence. We are committed to education and action. Please read this Broken Rifle with an eye towards seeing how you and your group can be involved in this new programme. And please give as generously as you can so WRI can develop this work.

Joanne Sheehan
WRI Chair

Upcoming War Resisters’ International events


The Broken Rifle

This issue of The Broken Rifle marks WRI’s launching of our new Nonviolence Programme. A process that has been going on since our Council meeting in June, we are looking forward to the arrival of our new programme staffperson, Javier Garate, who will be moving from Chile to London in March.

WRI exists to promote nonviolent action against the causese of war. The promotion of nonviolence is one of our two main goals, along with promotion of antimilitarism. We are now merging WRI programmes to strengthen our ability to promote nonviolence. This work will be built on a history of promoting nonviolence in WRI, and by WRI Sections throughout the world.

WRI is in a unique position as we develop the programme. A secular pacifist organisation for 84 years, we are a network of grassroots groups committed to nonviolence, organizing nonviolent action, experimenting with the potential of nonviolence. We are committed to education and action. Please read this Broken Rifle with an eye towards seeing how you and your group can be involved in this new programme. And please give as generously as you can so WRI can develop this work.

Joanne Sheehan
WRI Chair

G8 in Scotland Blockade at Faslane

Britain’s nuclear weapons - the four Trident nuclear weapon submarines based at Faslane on the west coast of Scotland - have a destructive power 1000 times greater than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. They are used, every day, to threaten the rest of the world, and to defend Britain’s “vital economic interests” like oil supplies and shipping lanes. Trident benefits the big multinational corporations who see their investments protected around the world, and also the weapons companies who benefit from big arms contracts.

The G8 is an annual meeting of the eight most powerful countries in the world (US, UK, France, Italy, Germany, Canada, Japan and Russia). The 2005 summit will be held in Gleneagles, Scotland from 6-8 July.

The Action

We intend to disrupt the work at Faslane as much as possible, primarily by blocking the entrances during the morning shift change. We also hope that people will try to enter the base, whether by cutting or climbing the fence or by swimming in. More information on how to do this safely and effectively will be available nearer the time.

More information: http://www.tridentploughshares.org/g8

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Nonviolence Programme staff appointed

We are very pleased to announce that War Resisters’ International has hired Javier Garate from Santiago, Chile as staff for our new Nonviolence Programme.

Javier, who is active with Ni Casco Ni Uniforme (Neither Helmet nor Uniform), a WRI Section, brings a variety of experiences that will help him in his new work. Some of you may have met Javier when he attended the International Conscientious Objectors’ Day training and activities in Israel in 2003. He was also one of the host organisers for May 15th in Chile in 2004. Javier will begin work in London in mid-March.

Joaanne Sheehan, WRI Chair

A word from Javier

My name is Javier Garate. To be chosen for the job at the WRI gives me great joy, and at the same time, it is a big challenge. The challenge, that together all of us who are part of WRI can develop an active campaign on nonviolence and can struggle against the war profiteers. To meet this challenge, a strong network coordination and working together with commitment and cooperation is essential.

In this same spirit I intend to draw on the different experiences that have been developed in nonviolence, to create the materials to support the existing experiences and at the same time promote them so that new experiences can emerge in the nonviolence struggle.

I will bring all my experience gained during the seven years of work in the conscientious objection group Ni Casco Ni Uniforme in Santiago Chile. I am a founding member, and part of the first group to present ourselves as CO, a right that is still not recognised in Chile.

At the same time I hope to contribute with the perspectives that my anthropology studies give me in order to promote the values of cultural diversity. I don’t have more to say other than to invite you to join us in the big challenge that a nonviolence program has in today’s world.

Javier Garate

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Areas of work

The Nonviolence Programme will focus on three closely related and intertwined areas:

Nonviolence Resources

Development and distribution of resources on nonviolence and nonviolent strategies for use by the WRI network and the wider movement. Such resources include a handbook for nonviolent action, a collection of case studies of nonviolent campaigns, nonviolence training and campaign development materials.

In cooperation with WRI’s Nonviolence Training Working Group and WRI affiliates, and building on the work of the former Nonviolence and Social Empowerment Programme, the programme will collect and develop resources on nonviolence, nonviolent action, nonviolent strategies, and nonviolent training, which draw on the experiences of nonviolent struggles from different countries and different movements. A first project could be the collection and production of a “Handbook for Nonviolent Action”, which can serve as a cross-cultural introduction to nonviolence and nonviolent action. Such a publication should be made available in print and online, in several languages.

War Resisters’ International commissioned several case studies prior to the Nonviolence and Social Empowerment Study Conference. These case studies can form the base for a broader collection of case studies, and should also be made available in several languages online.

Nonviolence for Change

Networking with groups interested in using nonviolence for social change, coordination of workshops at gatherings such as Social Forums, making WRI’s resources available to grassroots activists doing anti-militarist globalisation from below work.

In 2002, WRI Council member Oscar Huenschunao represented WRI at the World Social Forum in Porto Allegre, as did WRI Council member Jørgen Johansen, who also participated in 2003, and in Mumbai 2004. A number of WRI affiliates and other nonviolent groups are present at Social Fora, and other major events, or are involved in major activities of the movement for globalisation from below, such as Seattle, Genoa, and others. Last year War Resisters’ International coordinated a pacifist and antimilitarist presence at the European Social Forum in London in October 2004. It will be an important aspect of the Nonviolence Programme to expand on these activities, and to network even more actively with groups from the WRI network and beyond. It is important to make resources on nonviolence available to all those willing to use them, such as WRI affiliate War Resisters League did prior to the protests at the WTO meeting in Seattle, when it printed and distributed 6,000 copies of its “Handbook for Nonviolent Action.”

Nonviolence for Change continued from page 1

May 24 International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament

began in Europe in the early 1980s, when hundreds of thousands of women organised against nuclear weapons and the arms race. Since the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and the International Peace Bureau have published an annual information pack to raise awareness of and increase support for women’s peace initiatives.

The 2005 Action Pack looks at women’s nonviolent work for peace in the Pacific area, UN SC Resolution 1325 and women combatants.

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The 2005 Action Pack looks at women’s nonviolent work for peace in the Pacific area, UN SC Resolution 1325 and women combatants.
At the War Resisters’ International Council meeting in Chird in June 2004, the possibility of a WRI campaign against war profiteers was one important part of the discussion on the new nonviolence programme. As part of its work on the programme, International affiliates work on issues related to war profiteers – such as the War Resisters League with its “Stop the merchants of death” campaign, or Forum voor Vredesactie in Belgium – but the debate also showed that war profiteering is an issue which is difficult to define.

War profiteering: Iraq
At the World Social Forum in Mumbai in February 2004 - about 1 year ago - Arundhati Roy called on us to “become the resistance to the occupation”. She went on: “I suggest that (...) we choose, by some means, two of the major corporations that are profiting from something called Iraq. We could then list every project they are involved in. We could locate their activities in Iraq and everywhere across the country. We could go after them. We could shut down private companies...”

So far, a variety of groups focus their attention on the US company Haliburton, which is one of the main contractors of the US military and the US government in Iraq. According to Corporate Watch, “the biggest windfall in the invasion of Iraq is supposed to have gone to the oil services and logistics company Halliburton. The company, which was formerly run by Vice President Dick Cheney, has won over $8 billion in contracts in 2003 alone.”

In Britain, Windrush Communications is one of the targets, as Windrush organise the Iraq Procurement Conferences, where contracts to plunder Iraq are negotiated. A variety of campaigning and action groups are involved in activities against the “plunder of Iraq”, among others Voices in the Wilderness UK.

War profiteering: beyond Iraq
A brainstorming at the Council meeting showed the variety of companies/agencies-involved in war profiteering: weapon manufacturers and arms dealers, war lords and states, the media, private companies (such as Halliburton) and the “humanitarian aid industry”, facilities management companies, private military contractors (mercenaries), financial institutions (banks), raw material companies (oil, diamonds, minerals, etc.). This variety poses a challenge: what should be the focus of an antimilitarist campaign against war profiteers?

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Some people feel that weapon manufacturers and arms dealers are dealt with by very often very professional and elite organisations - in Europe mostly by groups affiliated to ENAAT (European Network for Antiwar Action), which develop their own local campaign. We could go after them.

We offer participants nonviolent training and help in keeping the action nonviolent. So, a private war against war profiteers would be the focus of an antimilitarist campaign against war profiteers.

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WRI merchandise

You can order merchandise from War Resisters’ International by filling out this form and sending it to War Resisters’ International, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX, Britain – together with a cheque made out to War Resisters’ International in £, €, US$, or order online at http://wri-irg.org/shop/shop.uk.htm. All prices include postage.

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Working against war profiteers

Some examples of campaigns by War Resisters’ affiliates and others

Serco Group plc shareholders campaign: legal and fun!

Serco is part of the consortium that runs Aldermaston. Since the company began its involvement with the British nuclear weapons programme, women from the Aldermaston Women’s Peace Campaign (AWPC) began organizing a shareholder campaign. As Serco Group plc is huge and rapidly expanding company, AWPC had expected their AGM to be a moderately impressive affair: not a big deal. Whilst the coffee and apple Danish were pretty classy, and the atmosphere reeks of money, privilege and power, the meetings themselves are very small and short.

The first two meetings, Aldermaston Women attended (2001 and 2002) consisted of a board of about ten people on the platform and an audience of about twenty people in a small conference room. They had no idea what to do with AWPC. Consequently, although there were only about five women from AWPC, they were able to hold the floor and rant about Aldermaston for about half an hour. Since the meeting adjourned, interrupted it frequently, and ended with a rousing poem and a colourful banner. The most recent AGM was held on 30 May 2003.

Both men and women are needed to take an active part in this aspect of our protest, though only women may become shareholders in the campaign and participate in the AGM (this is women’s desire to create a women-only action inside the AGM)!

The Serco shareholders campaign is in its infancy and there are many avenues to explore and potential locations for applying pressure. As part of the resistance to Britain’s nuclear weapons, Aldermaston Women will continue to investigate…

Contact: Aldermaston Women’s Peace Campaign, www.aldermaston.net

The Broken Rifle

The War Resisters’ League has decided to promote awareness of the UK government’s involvement in the Iraq war as part of its campaign ‘My Money. Clear the Debt’. ‘My Money. Clear the Debt’ aims to highlight the contribution of international business and finance to the Iraq war by raising notification of businesses involved in the war cry: Who it is our leaders are actually supporting and connecting war resisters all over the world

For the past year, four Belgian organisations (one of them being WRI affiliate forum for Vredesactie) have been running the campaign ‘My Money. Clear the Debt’. This campaign denounces the fact that banks are using their clients’ money to invest in the weapon industry.

During that year of campaigning, two reports have been released. These reports show the investments in (controversial) weapon systems by the 5 most prominent international banking groups in Belgium. They caused a lot of commotion within the Belgian public, press and financial sector. At this moment, the campaign has already reached some very important and concrete results and we expect some new positive evolutions in the near future.

Contact: www.network-vlaanderen.be/action.php?campage=1&article=9&lang=en or http://www.vredesactie.be

MERCHANTS OF DEATH

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